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LITTLE REVIEWS ANTHOLOGY 1945





LITTLE REVIEWS  
ANTHOLOGY  
1945

EDITED BY  
DENYS VAL BAKER

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## INTRODUCTION

'War does not kill Truth. Neither does it kill Culture.'—the association of symbols is appropriate. In other words, true art is indestructible. But war will do its worst, and if it cannot destroy it is always likely to maim, throttle, poison or generally stultify to such an extent that the last fatal stroke might just as well be administered. What saves art, in the end, is the integrity of the genuine creative artist. Looking back now upon the long years of wartime life in Britain we can appreciate how very much is owed to this integrity—and, also, how invaluable has been the existence, however restricted, of a medium for its expression. If art is to reach any sort of a public, then it needs communication. In literature the writer must have his printed page just as, in drama, the dramatist must have his theatre. Unfortunately, and only too often, sham art seems to monopolise the channels of communication. What if the majority of printed pages are filled with hack journalese and lurid crime and sex stories? What if most theatres are content to stage musical comedies, bedroom farces and murder plays? Such tendencies are ever present, in peacetime or wartime, and they are poorly countered by easy sneers, or even by passive boycott. The only really successful answer is an active one, and as, in drama, it takes its most vital form in the little theatre or repertory group—so, in contemporary writing, it is well represented by the little review or literary magazine. Perhaps the best measure of the strength and influence of both these movements in Britain today is that, after enduring all the difficulties and depressions of earlier periods of the war, they have emerged in such flourishing condition that many of their ideas and standards are permeating, with growing effect, into the commercial theatre and the popular press.

The little review—the particular art communication medium with which this anthology is concerned—is important to literature because it provides a contemporary record of trends in new writing that might otherwise receive little or no recognition. It would be impossible and probably undesirable to find a place for more than a small amount of this sort of work in book form. When a writer writes a book he creates something, out of long labour and revision, that is somehow permanent and enduring, whatever its critical quality. But before doing this or besides, he will inevitably need to practise and experiment, to adventure with new styles and techniques. The place to do this is in the accommodating pages of the little review, and the literary history of the past two centuries or more is one long story of writers, later to become

famous, making their first appearances in print among small and unknown magazines. But little reviews have other, equally important functions. They often provide the only available means of expression for new forms of writing which, though likely by their impact to inspire revolutionary changes in contemporary literature, would be given scanty notice in the popular press, and ignored by nine out of ten book publishers. It was the serial publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in literary papers such as the American *Little Review* and the English *Egoist* that helped towards creating the conditions for book publication. In the same way, it is often only in little reviews—unhampered for the most part by the usual social or money-making conventions—that writers are able to say exactly what they want to say, whether it be about their own or another writer's work, or about some aspect of the ethics of writing. It was in a literary paper, *Horizon* for example, that a lengthy critical article was published revealing the dubious standards of Britain's boys' magazines—a subject unlikely to receive an airing among the popular newspapers or periodicals. The attempts by authorities in Eire to interfere with the freedom of expression of Irish artists are vigorously resisted by the Irish literary papers, though the interference is countenanced and even encouraged by large sections of the general press. In Britain such little reviews as *Now*, *Adelphi*, *Scythe*, *Wales*, etc. make it clear that in their view the creative artist who turns his talents to producing reams of elegant Government propaganda literature is, whether he realises it or not, prostituting himself as an artist. Whatever one might think of this view there is no denying that it is widely held among artists—yet is seldom if ever referred to in the general press, other than in condemnation. Finally, it is often the case that unorthodox writers and visionaries, finding their work deliberately ignored by periodical and book publishers, attempt a solution by launching their own magazines. A famous example of this was *Blast*, launched by the artist, Percy Wyndham Lewis, just before the Great War, and others that come to mind are D. H. Lawrence's *Signature*, also sponsored during the Great War, and John Middleton Murry's *Adelphi* and *The Wanderer*. Hugh MacDiarmid, regarded by many as Scotland's leading modern poet but unpopular with many editors for his strong Scottish Nationalist outlook, brought out his own *Voice of Scotland* just before this war. Sometimes (as, indeed, in the case of some of the above mentioned) little reviews have short, if adventurous lives. On the other hand there are reviews, such as *Adelphi*, *Life and Letters Today*, *Poetry Review*, *Dublin Magazine*, which are all twenty or more years old—while *Cornhill*, recently resumed after a short wartime break, goes back to January, 1860 for its

birthday. The truth is that the value of little reviews is measured not in age, but in purpose. It does not matter if, as has more than once happened, a little review achieves only one issue—there has been one more temporary outlet for creative work untrammelled by concessions to commercial and so-called popular conventions.<sup>1</sup>

What, then is the position today among the little reviews of Britain? It is an encouraging one. Unfortunately there has never been, and probably never will be, any sort of authentic record of the number of little reviews in existence at any given time. A super research worker could trace down the majority of reviews at the British Museum, but then he would still be without any guide to the considerable number of smaller or privately-circulated magazines which have never bothered to make official registration. Whether, in terms of specific figures, there are more little reviews today than there were, for instance, in the '20s or '30s, it is impossible to say. In any case there is no precise definition by which to identify a little review, and categorisation becomes a matter, finally, of personal decision. Here, as seeming most reasonable, the term is taken to mean only specifically *literary* papers, thus excluding a number of publications such as the *New Statesman*, *Spectator*, *Time and Tide*, *World Review*, etc. which have extensive literary sections but which nevertheless are primarily political papers. Allowing for these various difficulties, it is obvious to anyone who has studied the subject that there is more activity, more vitality and enthusiasm, among little reviews today than for a very long time. This is all the more pleasing when it is remembered that, during and just before the early part of the war, a large number of reviews found themselves compelled to cease publication. Among the more notable of these were *Cornhill*, *Criterion*, *New Stories*, *Wales*, *Welsh Review*, *Voice of Scotland*, *Purpose* and *London Mercury* (which was, however, incorporated into *Life and Letters Today*). It was an ominous period. The beloved banner THERE IS NO ROOM FOR CULTURE IN WARTIME! was being brandished far and wide. There was much talk of stopping production of new books, of allowing publication only of 'essential' newspapers and periodicals. Perhaps the threat came fortunately, since it evoked protestations not only from writers and editors but also from the reading public. As is frequently the case, people became more aware of the value of liberties and possessions upon being faced with the possibility of losing them.

<sup>1</sup> This is not meant to imply that all little reviews are unique and beyond criticism. Views and standards differ considerably; some print better and more mature work than others; one may propagate the exactly opposite policy to another, and so on. Each individual reader will form his own highly personal opinion as to whether a review is good, bad or indifferent. What matters is that he should have the reviews to choose from.

As this applied to books, so it applied—more acutely because the field was a much smaller one—to little reviews. Out of this re-awakened interest was born a vigorous demand for more, not less, publications of creative writing. The result was a reversal of the first gloomy outlook and the appearance, from 1940 onwards, of many new reviews—including *Horizon*, *Now*, *Bell*, *Our Time*, *Penguin New Writing*, *Wind and the Rain*, *Poetry London*, *Kingdom Come*, *Indian Writing*, *Here and Now*, *Opus*, *Manuscript*, *Phoenix*, *Oasis*, the revised *Seven* and revised *Poetry Quarterly*. The outlooks of these publications varied—some existed to publish the work of one group of writers, others concentrated on one form of writing, such as fiction—but one item of policy was common to all. That was a determination to let writers, and particularly new writers, have the opportunity (they might easily have been deprived of) to express themselves to a reading public.

The fact that with hardly an exception these and other reviews have survived and are flourishing to this day makes it no surprise that more recently, in the past two years or so, many further new reviews have appeared, or ceased ones revived. This expansion is notable for two significant trends. The first is a great increase in the scope for publication of poetry. Whether this is partly due to the convention that poetry always booms during wartime can only be proved or disproved after a fairly long period of peacetime conditions. But it is a stimulating fact that there are now so many independent reviews devoted entirely to poetry—from such established papers as *Poetry London*, *Poetry Quarterly*, *Poetry Review*, *Poetry Today*, *Decachord*, to the many smaller and courageous publications such as *Poetry Folios*, *Dint*, *Fulcrum*, *Outposts*, etc. 'With a more liberal education and the advances made in modern publishing there is more poetry being written, made public and read, in this century than in any other', commented a recent editorial in *Poetry London*, going on to suggest that 'had such a magazine as *Poetry London* existed before for publishing young poets, the number of interesting poets in the thirties would have been much greater'. As the same paper pointed out 'in creative work the opportunities offered a person count as much as the capacity for such work' and there is no doubt that the younger poets of today will be better and more mature craftsmen tomorrow, thanks to extra opportunities for communication to wide circles of readers, than might have been the case at an earlier period. Viewing the matter from another angle, it is interesting to note *Poetry Quarterly*, in commenting on the value of little reviews, also drawing attention to the exceptional loyalty and consistent encouragement and support of its own readers. This is equally true of other reviews and is a factor of considerable importance.

to the contributor. The judgment and criticism of a reader who has read his work over a period is of far greater value to a writer than that of a casual reader judging upon one item. Especially, one feels, would this be so in the case of poetry. It is not the place in this article to attempt an assessment of the quality of modern poetry, but it might be worth mentioning, in passing, four trends that become clear from a steady perusal of little reviews devoted to poetry. These are towards (1) a greater proportion of work by new and unknown poets, (2) longer and more lyrical poems, as well as poetic drama, (3) an increased emphasis, by poets of many different outlooks, upon the need to reaffirm human values and the importance of individual freedom, (4) greater attention and space to the nationalist and dialect poetry of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and other small countries—a concrete example of the last trend being the appearance of *Poetry Scotland*, which aims to provide a meeting-place for the work of Scottish poets, much of it in Gaelic and Lallans.

It is this expansion in the number of reviews such as *Poetry (Scotland)* which is the second significant trend to be noted, marking as it does a general revitalisation of national and regional cultures. Significant, because it occurs at a time of the most powerful arguments and movements towards a vast centralised administration of the world and its peoples. Everyone agrees upon the necessity for international understanding and world co-operation, but not everyone, it is apparent, agrees that this can best be obtained via the machinations of a huge and artificially imposed bureaucracy. An alternative view for which there is increasing support is that world brotherhood will be more naturally established via communities of free individuals, freely federated on a basis of mutual aid. In the economic sphere this would mean, in the words of Herbert Read, the evolution of 'communities of self-governing industries, free alike from the unchecked rule of monopoly capital and the centralised control of the State'. In the cultural sphere there would be the happier tendency for art to develop on a regional basis, deriving renewed strength from local traditions and craftsmanship; such a tendency, too, would help to replace art where it should be—an intrinsic part of the pattern of everyday life. Rightly or wrongly, very many artists today are lending their support to this second viewpoint, feeling it more in sympathy with their heritage of freedom of expression than is a policy of widening State control, with its inevitable limitations and restrictions.

Since the artist is accepted fairly unanimously as the visionary of his age it would be reasonable to expect some attention and respect to be paid to his pleas. But he could plead in vain, and to himself, so far as

90 per cent. of the usual channels of printed opinion are concerned. Consequently it is encouraging to note the appearance of several reviews which stand for a revival of regional cultures, among them *Scottish Art and Letters*, *Poetry Scotland*, *Scots Writing*, the revived *Welsh Review* and the revived *Wales* (while in Eire there continue such authoritative voices as *Bell*, now more firmly established, and *Dublin Magazine*, which recently celebrated its twenty-first birthday). There is even now a little review, *New Saxon*, pledged as part of its policy to encourage a revival of *English* culture. *Here Today*, a review of art and drama in the Reading area of England, one of several such small collections that have sprung up in various parts of the country, is yet a further signpost of the regional art revival. How important it is that these movements should develop is clearly indicated by some comment from their editorial pages. A country's or a region's art soon withers and wastes away if it lacks direction and a means of expression, especially if there are strong neighbouring influences. 'Too often the Scottish artist has succumbed quite unconsciously to the idea that all critical standards have their locale in London and must necessarily continue to do so' complains *Scottish Art and Letters*: and adds 'It is only when the writers and artists find an interest and encouragement among their own people that they are likely to use their best material. . . . Most of the world's best artistic work proves on examination to be, not cosmopolitan, however international its appeal, but racial and national in the most uncompromising way.' Already, warns the first issue of the revived *Welsh Review*, 'Wales is a divided country. . . . There is the language cleavage, and, inevitably a cleavage of tradition and present outlook. There is a vernacular and an Anglo-Welsh literature, which will henceforth exist side by side. There are differences of geography, population, and livelihood, and wealth. There are those to whom this is a deplorable fact, others who find it bitter past telling, but fact it is.' The editor sees no future for Wales until the two outlooks are reconciled and affirms 'Can any work be more useful to Wales, as things are, than to keep the English-speaking Welsh bound to their homeland?'—a work which is one of the paper's main policies. The revived *Wales*, heralding a Welsh renaissance, re-emphasises the fact that 'the war has made the Welsh realise that they are a nation with a country, a people, a culture and a tradition *different* from England's to fight for. There is a new wave of national feeling among our people.' While hoping eventually for Welsh self-government, *Wales*, like *Welsh Review*, is particularly anxious to bring together the divided 'progressive elements' and differing national viewpoints of Wales. As one contributor points out: 'There is complete unanimity at least on

one point in Wales; it is that a return to the pre-war Wales is unthinkable. We sang the Welsh National Anthem—"Land of My Fathers", with gusto; held our National Eisteddfod annually, extolling the virtues of Welsh Culture; buried our heads in the sands and allowed the real people to be exported like cattle, in their thousands, to England.' Among its proposals for the future, *Wales* suggests that its writers and artists would do themselves no harm if they could tramp up and down their countryside and help to re-create a Wales where, in the words of Matthew Arnold, 'the past still lives, where every place has its tradition, every name its poetry, and where the people, the genuine people, know this past, this tradition, this poetry, *and live with it and cling to it*'.

Scotland and Wales are two obvious, as well as the nearest, examples where little reviews, by their existence and growth, are helping in a very real way to achieve a cultural renaissance. Much the same can be said about Eire, where *Bell*, *Dublin Magazine*, *Studies* and other reviews are vigorous outlets for new Irish writing with the difference that editorial protests are not against influences of alien cultures so much as against the Eire Government's extraordinarily antiquated censorship of art and literature. But the recent wartime years have also seen Britain become the temporary home of quite a number of other nationalist little reviews—those, in fact, published by and for refugee groups from European countries that were occupied for several years by the Germans. Quite large numbers of peoples of various nationalities became resident in Britain by such circumstances of the war. Starved of so many of their normal meeting-grounds and media of communication it is easy to imagine how they valued their publications over here—how very important a part such publications have played in keeping alive the spirit of their respective countries' culture. In many cases these 'reviews from overseas', so to speak, circulated not only in Britain but also, in large quantities, via underground movements, in occupied countries, thus providing a rare and important means of contact between people there and their refugee countrymen. At the same time it has been a generous gesture of many of these reviews to print at least a part of their contents (or to duplicate the whole) in English, thus providing British readers with an excellent opportunity of obtaining an unusually intimate introduction to current literary trends and literature of European countries. Conversely, there have been reviews such as *La France Libre* and *Belgian Message*, to mention but two, which have given considerable space to work by and about British writers, so that the introduction and acquaintance shall be a mutual one. A reading of either of the above papers—or of other tem-

porarily Anglo-resident papers, such as the Norwegian *Norsemen*, the Czech *Review-43* or the Greek *Hellas*—reveals a standard of work higher than most and comparable with any British reviews. And, along with the Welsh, Irish and Scottish reviews, they do seem to reflect their national cultures more strongly than the average *English* review. It is a curious fact that many English reviews give generous space to studies of the art and literature of other countries, as well as to stories and poems by their writers, but seldom seem to give much consideration to similar trends in England. Where there is adequate attention paid to native culture, then, of course, news about overseas developments is very welcome. An example of what can usefully be done in this direction is provided by an arrangement whereby *La France Libre* and *Penguin New Writing* (a notable exception to the above criticism) occasionally exchange articles, stories, poems, etc. A variation of this, at least in regard to poetry, was envisaged by the editor of *Poetry London*, on welcoming the establishment of *Poetry Scotland*. He looked forward to the appearance of 'cousin-periodicals all over Europe, each local in the sense that it featured home poets most strongly; each international in the sense that it featured the finest new poetry of all lands in a smaller measure.' Certainly this sort of cultural link-up would be a natural development of the little review movement, and one more emphasis of its importance.

One further development in the field of little reviews which must be mentioned here is concerned, paradoxical though it may sound, with a class of publication that is not, to be technically accurate, a little review. That is the book anthology, or book-magazine. In price, size and appearance these are books; but in contents and aims some of them are very similar to little reviews. As soon as conditions permit it is likely that several reviews will develop from among these books. During the past two or three years they have steadily increased in number and can be divided, roughly, into three main categories. These are: *First*, anthologies of writing by men and women in the Services, such as *Bugle Blast*, *Khaki and Blue*, *The First Eighteen*, *Poems from the Forces*, *Air Force Poetry*, etc. Although of necessity limited—in most cases—to the period of the war, these collections have done a fine job in providing a common platform for writers, who, whatever their individual outlook, have been joined by circumstances in the same life. It is probably a true saying that the really great writing about war is done long after the end of hostilities, but much of that writing, when it comes, is likely to have benefited from the experience and practice gained in contributing to these various wartime anthologies. *Second*, anthologies built up to illustrate a particular theme, or a religious or

political faith, some definite way of life. From among these collections we can expect many post-war reviews. It is interesting to note that many of these express the viewpoint of the 'free artist' mentioned in an earlier paragraph. 'We need a new way of living based on the integrity of each individual', proclaims *Transformation*, a bulky collection of articles, prose and poetry aiming to expound the personalist philosophy. A similar viewpoint is noticeable in *New Road*, which makes a feature of including sections of writing by writers of other countries—as does another well-established anthology, *New Writing and Daylight*, a companion volume to *Penguin New Writing*, and with a similar policy. Several group anthologies, outlets for the writers classified under the loose heading 'the Apocalyptic', have been or are being published—*Counterpoint*, *The White Horseman*, *The Windmill* and *The Crown and the Sickle*. *Scottish Signposts*, an anthology of new Scottish writing, holds promise of yet another Scottish magazine. *Third*, anthologies devoted primarily to the short story. Until this war the short story has been the ugly duckling of literature, in Britain. It is perhaps already a truism to say that during the war the short story has achieved its proper position of importance. Today there are more publications devoted to the presentation of short stories than at any other time in British history. Yet as short a time ago as 1939 there were only a handful of magazines dealing with the short story as a serious art form. Standards of modern short stories vary considerably, but it is worth remembering that the more publication outlets there are, the more writers may be expected to give attention to this form of writing. In time, so long as the direction and editing of short story collections aims at a high standard, there will be a whole new class of competent—and, we may hope, brilliant—British short story writers. Some of the earliest of these short story collections to reach a wide public (and to help create an even wider public) were the *New Writing* collections, *Modern Reading (Big Ben Series)*, *Selected Writing*, *English Story* and *Penguin Parade*. These are all still continuing, and have been joined by many other collections, including *Stories of the Forties*, *Writing Today*, *Saturday Book*, *Printers' Pie*, *Map of Hearts*, *International Short Stories*, *New Short Stories* and *The Tempest*.

It would be tempting to take this survey further—to consider, for example, the small but varied group of religious publications which expound the religious attitude to art and literature: papers such as the Catholic *Blackfriars*, or the *Churchman*, or *St. Martin's Review*, or *Christendom*. And it should be remembered that every field of art and crafts has its own publication or publications—the theatrical profession has its *Theatre World*, its *Stage* and *Wartime Drama*; the film world its

*Sight and Sound*, *Today's Cinema*, etc; the art world its *Apollo* and its *Burlington Magazine*; the music world its *Music and Letters*, its *Music Review*; the writers' (technical) world, its *Author* and its *Quill*. These are but a few from among many such publications. Those who are sufficiently interested will soon find out further details in whatever field interests them. The purpose of this short article has been to sketch in some of the broad details of a background to literature that has never had the recognition it deserves. As the editor of *Poetry Quarterly* recently commented, referring to little reviews: 'Their circulation is a minute fraction of that of the commercial periodical, but they alone are sensitive to the real as opposed to fake currents in contemporary literature. They only give space to a rising generation which cannot or will not associate itself with the hierarchies above them. Their pages are full of names which will make literary history....' The way in which Britain's little reviews have not only survived but expanded through all the exigencies of wartime conditions is, perhaps, their best promise for the future.

Finally, in presenting the second of these annual collections of writings from the little reviews of Britain and Eire, I should like to tabulate a few points of explanation that may help the reader to visualise the anthology as a whole. First, it is a *representative* as much as a selective anthology—that is to say, the choice of material, while aiming at a high standard of quality, has deliberately taken view of other considerations. Since the editorial contents of little reviews include articles and criticism, as well as stories, sketches and poems, I have attempted to give equal space to all five forms of writing. While some reviews are inevitably better represented, numerically, than others (and one or two through circumstances beyond control cannot be included in this particular anthology) I have attempted to select items from as wide a number of reviews as possible. A fundamental purpose of little reviews, if not *the* fundamental purpose, being to provide a platform for new and younger writers, preference has been given to the latter, though many established writers are also included. Where possible without a lowering of the general standard, items have been chosen that are representative of the outlook of the review in which they appeared. It is hoped that in this way, together with the background information of this article and the detailed bibliography at the end of the book, this and future annual editions of the *Little Reviews*

*Anthology* will help to draw an increasingly wider public attention to little reviews and the services they render. To the editors of all the reviews represented I extend warm thanks for their co-operation.

THE EDITOR



## *Face of My People*

ANNA KAVAN

Before they took over the big house and turned it into a psychiatric hospital, the room must have been somebody's boudoir. It was upstairs, quite a small room, with a painted ceiling of cupids and flowers and doves. the walls divided by plaster mouldings to simulate pillars and wreaths, and the panels between the mouldings sky blue. It was a frivolous little room. The name Dr. Pope looked like a mistake on the door and so did the furniture, which was not at all frivolous but ugly and utilitarian, the big office desk, the rather ominous high, hard thing that was neither a bed nor a couch.

Dr. Pope did not look at all frivolous either. He was about forty, tall, straight, muscular, with a large, impersonal, hairless, tidy face, rather alarmingly alert and determined looking. He did not look in the least like a holy father, or, for that matter, like any sort of father. If one thought of him in terms of the family he was more like an efficient and intolerant elder brother who would have no patience with the weaknesses of younger siblings.

Dr. Pope came into his room after lunch, walking fast as he always did, and shut the door after him. He did not look at the painted ceiling or out of the open window through which came sunshine and the pleasant rustle of trees. Although the day was warm he wore a thick dark double-breasted suit and did not seem hot in it. He sat down at once at the desk.

There was a pile of coloured folders in front of him. He took the top folder from the pile and opened it and began reading the typed case notes inside. He read carefully, with the easy concentration of an untroubled singlemindedness. Occasionally, if any point required consideration, he looked up from the page and stared reflectively at the blue wall over the desk where he had fastened with drawing pins a number of tables and charts. These pauses for reflexion never lasted more than a few seconds; he made his decisions quickly and they were final. He went on steadily reading, holding his fountain pen and sometimes making a note on the typescript in firm, small, legible handwriting.

Presently there was a knock and he called out, 'Come in.'

'Will you sign this pass, please, for Sergeant Hunter?' a nurse said, coming up to the desk.

She put a yellow slip on the desk and the doctor said, 'Oh, yes', and signed it impatiently and she picked it up, and put a little sheaf of hand-written pages in its place and he, starting to read through these new papers with the impatience gone from his manner, said, 'Ah, the ward reports', in a different voice that sounded interested and eager.

The nurse stood looking over his shoulder at the writing, most of which was her own.

'Excellent. Excellent', Dr. Pope said after a while. He glanced up at the waiting nurse and smiled at her. She was his best nurse, he had trained her himself in his own methods, and the result was entirely satisfactory. She was an invaluable and trustworthy assistant who understood what he was trying to do, approved of his technique, and co-operated intelligently. 'Really excellent work,' he repeated, smiling.

She smiled back and for a moment the identical look of gratification on the two faces gave them a curious resemblance to one another, almost as if they were near relatives, although they were not really alike at all.

'Yes', she said. 'We're certainly getting results now. The general morale in the wards has improved enormously.' Then her face became serious again and she said, 'If only we could get ward six into line.'

The smile simultaneously disappeared from the doctor's face and a look that was more characteristic appeared there; a look of impatience and irritation. He turned the pages in front of him and re-read one of them and the irritated expression became fixed.

'Yes, I see. Ward six again. I suppose it's that fellow Williams making a nuisance of himself as usual.'

'It's impossible to do anything with him.' The nurse's cool voice contained annoyance behind its coolness. 'He's a bad type, I'm afraid. Obstructive and stubborn. Unfortunately some of the youngsters and the less stable men are apt to be influenced by his talk. He's always stirring up discontent in the ward.'

'These confounded trouble-makers are a menace to our whole work,' Dr. Pope said. 'Rebellious undesirables. I think friend Williams will have to be got rid of.' He pulled a scribbling pad across the desk and wrote the name Williams on it, pressing more heavily on the pen than he usually did so that the strokes of the letters came very black. He underlined the name with deliberation and drew a circle round it and pushed the pad back to its place and asked in a brisker tone:

'Anyone else in six giving trouble?'

'I've been rather worried about Kling the last day or two.'

'Kling? What's he been up to?'

'He seems very depressed, doctor.'

'You think his condition's deteriorating?'

'Well, he seems to be getting more depersonalised and generally inaccessible. There's no knowing what's in his head. It's not the language difficulty, either: his English is perfectly good. But he's hardly spoken a word since that day he was put in the gardening squad and got so upset.'

'Oh, yes; the gardening incident. Odd getting such a violent reaction there. It should give one a lead if there were time to go into it. But there isn't, of course. That's the worst of dealing with large numbers of patients as we are.' A shade of regret on the doctor's face faded out as he said to the nurse still standing beside him:

'You see far more of Kling than I do. What's your own opinion of him?'

'I think, personally, that he's got something on his mind. Something he won't talk about.'

'Make him talk, then. That's your job.'

'I've tried, of course. But it's no good. Perhaps he's afraid to talk. He's shut himself up like an oyster.'

'Oysters can be opened,' the doctor said. He twisted his chair round and smiled directly up at the good nurse he had trained. He was very pleased with her and with himself. In spite of troublesome individuals like Williams and Kling the work of the hospital was going extremely well. 'Provided, naturally, that one has the right implement with which to open them.'

He got up and stood with his back to the window which, to be in keeping with the room's decoration, should have had satin curtains but instead was framed in dusty blackout material. He had his hands in his trouser pockets and he was still smiling as he went on:

'We might try a little forcible opening on oyster Kling.'

The nurse nodded and made a sound of agreement and prepared to go, holding the signed pass in her hand.

'Lovely day, isn't it?' she remarked on her way, in order not to end the interview too abruptly.

Dr. Pope glanced into the sunshine and turned his back on it again.

'I'll be glad when the summer's over,' he said. 'Everyone's efficiency level drops in this sort of weather. Give me the cold days when we're all really keen and on our toes.'

The nurse went out and shut the door quietly.

The doctor swung round again in his energetic fashion and opened the window as wide as it would go, looking out over grassy grounds dark with evergreens. On a hard tennis court to the right a circle of patients in shorts clumsily and apathetically threw a football about and

he watched them just long enough to observe the bored slackness of their instructor's stance and to note automatically that the man was due for a reprimand. Then he went back to his desk under the smiling loves.

As if he were somehow aware of the doctor's censorious eye, the instructor outside just then straightened up and shouted with perfidious disgust, 'You there, Kling, or whatever your name is; wake up, for Christ's sake, can't you?'

The man who had not been ready when the ball was thrown to him, who had, in fact, altogether forgotten why he was supposed to be standing there on the hot reddish plane marked with arbitrary white lines, looked first at the instructor before bending down to the ball which had bounced off his leg and was slowly spinning on the gritty surface in front of him. He picked up the big ball and held it in both hands as though he did not know what to do with it, as though he could conceive of no possible connection between himself and this hard spherical object. Then, after a moment, he tossed it towards the man standing next to him in the ring, not more than two yards away, and at once forgot it again and nothing remained of the incident in his mind except the uneasy resentment that always came now when anyone called out to him.

For many months he had been called Kling, that being the first syllable and not the whole of his name, which was too difficult for these tongues trained in a different pronunciation. To start with, he had not minded the abbreviation, had even felt pleased because, like a nickname, it seemed to admit him to comradeship with the others. But now, for a long time, he had resented it. They've taken everything from me, even my name, he thought sometimes when the sullen misery settled on him. By 'they' he did not mean the men of another race with whom he shared sleeping room and food and daily routine, or any particular individuals, but just the impersonal machine that had caught and mauled him and dragged him away from the two small lakes and the mountains where his home was, far off to this flat country across the sea.

And then there was that other reason why the sound of the short syllable was disturbing.

The game, if it could be called that, came to an end and the patients slowly dispersed. There was a little free time left before tea. Some of the men walked back to the hospital, others lighted cigarettes and stood talking in groups, several lay full length on the grass or dawdled where illexes spread heavy mats of shade.

Kling sat down by himself on the top of a little bank. He was young, very big and broad, very well built if you didn't mind that depth of

chest, dark, his hair wiry like a black dog's, arms muscled for labour, his eyes only slightly decentred. He did not look ill at all, he looked enormously strong, only his movements were all rather stiff and slow, there was a marked unnatural rigidity about the upper part of his torso because of the lately healed wound and because of that heavy thing he carried inside him.

The bank was in full sunshine. Kling sat there sweating, dark stains spreading on his singlet, under the arms, sharp grasses pricking his powerful, bare, hairy legs, his breast stony feeling, waiting for time to pass. He was not consciously waiting. His apathy was so profound that it was not far removed from unconsciousness. A breeze blew and the tall grass rippled gently but he did not know. He did not know that the sun shone. His head was bent and the only movements about him were his slow breaths and the slowly widening stains on the singlet. His chest was hot and wet and gloom ached in the rocky weight the black stone weighed under his breastbone, and his big blackish eyes, dilated with gloom, stared straight ahead, only blinking when the sun-dazzle hurt, and sweat stood in the deep horizontal lines on his forehead.

While he sat there a row of patients with gardening tools, spades, rakes, hoes, on their shoulders, came near. They walked in single file in charge of a man walking alongside, himself in hospital clothes, but with stripes on his sleeve. Kling watched them coming. All of him that still lived, resentment, gloom, misery, and all his clouded confusion, slowly tightened towards alarm. He could see the polished edges of spades shining and he shuddered, all his consciousness gathering into fear because of the danger signals coming towards him across the grass. As he watched, his breathing quickened to heave his chest up and down, and, as the gardening squad reached the foot of the bank, he made a clumsy scramble and stood up.

Standing, he heard the clink of metal, and saw a shiny surface flash in the sun. The next moment he was running; stumbling stiffly, grappling the weight inside him, running from the men with the spades.

He heard the *Kling!* of his name being shouted, and again a second clattering *kling!* and running heard the spade kling-clink on the stone, he seemed to be holding it now, grasping the handle that slipped painfully in his wet hands, levering the blade under the huge ugly stone and straining finally as another frantic *kling!* came from the spade, and the toppling, heavy, leaden bulk of the stone fell and the old, mutilated face was hidden beneath, and Kling, stopping at the door of ward six where he had run, choking with strangled breath, while two men passing gazed at him in surprise, felt the dead mass of stone crushing his own breast.

He went into the ward and lay down on his bed and closed his eyes against the drops of sweat which trickled into the ends of his eyes. Then for a time there was nothing but the soreness of breath struggling against the stone.

This was what he had known a long while, ever since the truck had been blown thirty feet down into a ravine and he had seen the falling stone and felt it strike, felt it smash bone, tearing through muscle, sinew and vein to lodge itself immovably in his breast. Ever since then the stone had been there inside him, and at first it had seemed a small stone, just a dead spot, a sort of numbness under the breastbone. He had told the M.O. about it and the M.O. had laughed, saying there was no stone or possibility of a stone, and after that he had not spoken of it again; never once. But from the start he had been very uneasy, oppressed by the stone and by the heaviness that could come from it suddenly to drive away laughter and talk. He had tried not to think of the stone, but it had grown heavier and heavier until he could not think of anything else, until it crushed out everything else, and he could only carry it by making a very great effort. That was not so bad really because with the weight of the stone crushing him he was nothing, and that was not painful or frightening, it was just a waiting and that was nothing as well. But sometimes, perhaps at the moment of going to sleep, the dead weight lifted a little and then there were all the uncovered faces, the stone and the digging, and the old man would come back.

And so he lay very still on the bed, waiting for the deadness to overlay him, lying there in the knowledge that if the deadweight of the stone lifted to let him breathe the old man would come.

Strange how it was always this one who came and never one of the others.

The stone weight was lifting now and Kling, who had dozed a little while after his breath had stopped struggling, woke suddenly, frightened by the return of the bloody-faced man lying in brown leaves with hairs growing out of his nostrils and a torn shirt fluttering.

That was his father who had lain dead in the room beside the Blue Lake. No, not that man. When he thought of his home he couldn't see any faces, only the jagged line of the mountains like broken egg-shell against the sky; and the two lakes, the Blue Lake and the lake shaped like a harp. That, and sometimes the inn with the acid wine of the district greenish in thick glasses, the swarming trout in the small tank on the wall, crowded sleek fish bodies, slithering past the glass. But no faces ever. The stone blocked out all the home faces.

When he thought of the war it was always the digging he thought of

because, seeing him so strong and used to work with a spade, they had put him on that job from the beginning; and then there were faces, wrecked or fearful or quiet or obscene faces, far too many of them; how he had laboured and toiled till his saliva ran sour, desperate to hide the faces away from the brutal light.

How many faces had he covered with earth and stones? There surely were thousands; and always thousands more waiting: and he all the time digging demented, always the compulsive urge in him like a frenzy, to hide the ruined faces away. And sometimes he remembered that officer in charge of the burying party, the one who joked and sang all the time, he must have been a bit cracked really, boozed or something; but they had dug and shovelled till their hands were raw and blistered and hardly noticed the pain because of his Hey! Hi! Ho! and the jolly loud voice that he had.

There had been no singing that afternoon in the gully where the corpses, boys' and old men's among them, sprawled in the withered oak leaves between the rocks. Only haste then and the bitter taste in the mouth and the aching lungs, hacking the stony ground that was hard like iron to the weak bite of the spade, and the sky grey and muggy and flat and quiet. In the end someone had shouted and the others all started running back to the truck; and he had run too, and just then he had seen the old man lying flat on his back with blood congealing all down one side of his shattered face and the dry leaves gummed and blackening the blood.

Kling was looking now at this object that the stone had rolled aside to reveal. There was no stone weighting him any more as he watched the object, feeling the bed shake under him as he shook and the muscles twitching in his forearms and thighs.

Then watching the object, while his heart pounded, he saw the hairs sprouting at his father's nostrils as he lay dead on the wooden bed that was like a wagon without wheels, he saw a movement detach itself from this man in the gully, or perhaps it was the torn shirt which flapped in the wind, only there was no wind, and he did not stop to investigate but, knowing only the obsessional urge to hide at all costs that which ought not to be exposed to the level light, hoisted his spade and shoved and battered and fought the top heavy rock until he heard a grinding crash and knew the torn face bashed out of sight, shapeless—smashed and hidden under the stone: and was it the same stone that burst his own chest and sank its black, dead heaviness in his heart?

The weight fell again now so that there was no more pain or fright and the bed did not shake; there was only the waiting that was nothingness really, and the men in blue talking and moving about the ward.

That was all that he knew, sweat slowly drying as he lay on the bed, and the old man mercifully buried by the stone. The others took no notice of Kling nor he of them, and he heard their talk and did not know that he heard until a woman's voice cut through sharp. 'Williams, and the rest of you, why are you hanging about in the ward?' He turned his head then to the nurse who had just come in, she was speaking to him, too, 'Kling, you're to go to Dr. Pope after tea. You'd better get up and make yourself decent,' and he saw her flat, cold eyes linger on him as she went out of the door.

'Get up and make yourself decent,' the man called Williams said. 'That's a way to talk to a fellow who's sick.'

Kling said nothing but looked up at him, waiting.

'To hell with them,' Williams said. 'To hell with the whole set-up. Bloody racket to get sick men back into the army. Cannon fodder, that's all they care about. Taking advantage of poor mugs like us. Pep talks. Pills to pep you up. Dope to make you talk. Putting chaps to sleep and giving them electric shocks and Christ knows what. Lot of bloody guinea pigs, that's what we are. Bloody, isn't it?'

Kling was staring at him with blank eyes.

'Look at Kling here,' Williams said. 'Any fool can see he's as sick as hell. Why can't they leave him in peace? Why should he go back into their bloody army? This isn't his country anyway. Why should he fight for it?'

From the far reaches of his non-being Kling looked at the faces round him. They were all looking at him but they had no meaning. Williams had no meaning any more than the others. But he heard Williams go on.

'Damned Gestapo methods. Spying and snooping around listening to talk. Bitches of nurses. Why the hell do we stand for it?'

A bell was ringing and the patients started to move out of the ward. Kling, staring up, saw the meaningless shapes of their faces receding from him. He looked at Williams who was still there and Williams looked back at him, smiling, and said, 'Coming to tea, chum?' And in the words Kling half recognised something forgotten and long-lost, and some corresponding thing in him which had died long ago almost revived itself; but the stone was too heavy for that resurrection, and he could not know that what he wanted to do was to smile.

'So long, then, if you're stopping here,' Williams said. He pulled a packet of Weights out of his pocket and put a cigarette on the bed beside Kling's hand, which did not move. 'Don't let that bastard of a doctor put anything over you,' Kling heard Williams, walking towards the door, call back to him as he went.

Kling did not smoke the cigarette, or pick it up even; but after a time rose, and with those stiff motions which seemed to be rehearsing some exercise not well remembered, washed, dressed himself in shirt and blue trousers, combed his thick hair, and went along corridors to the door upon which was fastened the doctor's name.

There was a bench outside the door, and he sat down on it, waiting. The passage was dark because the windows had been coated with black paint for the blackout. Nothing moved in the long, dark, silent passage at the end of which Kling sat alone on the bench. He sat there bending forward, his hands clasped between his knees, his red tie dangling, his eyes fixed on the ground. He did not wonder what would happen behind the door. He waited, without speculation or awareness of waiting. It was all the same to him, outside or here or in the ward, he did not notice, it made no difference to his waiting.

A nurse opened the door and called him and he got up and stepped forward, and, looking past her along the wall of the corridor, thought: How many stones are there in this place; so many faces and stones: and lost the thought before it meant anything, and went into the room.

'I want you to lie on the couch,' Dr. Pope told him. 'We're going to give you a shot of something that will make you feel a bit sleepy. Quite a pleasant feeling. It won't hurt at all.'

Obedient, null, with that unnatural stiffness, Kling laid himself down.

Lying on the high couch he looked at the exuberant ceiling without surprise. The flowers and the crowding cherubic faces did not seem any more strange to him than anything else. The ceiling did not concern him any more than the doctor concerned him. Nothing concerned him except the heaviness in his breast. He waited, looking at the doctor as if he had never seen him before, the nurse busy with swab and spirit and tourniquet, and he felt far off on his arm the tourniquet tightening, the bursting pressure of flesh against tightening fabric, and then the small sharp sting as the needle entered the vein.

'Just try to relax,' the doctor said, watching, while the fluid in the hypodermic went down, the blank waiting face with wide-open extremely dilated eyes.

He smiled his professional smile of encouragement, and looked from the face at the chest and the massive shoulders bulked rigid under the white shirt that they stretched tight, at the clenched strong hands, the rough blue cloth strained on the tensed thighs, the stiffly upthrust boots not neatly laced, and back to the blank face again. He noticed on the face how the deep tan of the outdoor years was starting to turn yellowish as it slowly faded inside hospital walls.

'Well, how do you feel now?' he asked, smiling, the man who stared up at him without answering.

'I want you to talk, Kling,' he said. 'I want you to tell me what's worrying you.'

Kling, his patient, looked away from him and up at the ceiling.

'What is it you've got on your mind?' asked the doctor.

Kling stared upwards without speaking and now his limbs started twitching a little.

'You'll feel better after you've talked,' Dr. Pope said.

The nurse finished the long injection and withdrew the syringe adroitly. A single drop of blood oozed from the pierced vein and she dabbed a shred of cotton wool on to it and silently carried her paraphernalia into the background and stood watching.

'You've got to tell me what's making you miserable,' the doctor said, speaking loud. He bent down and put his hand on Kling's shoulder and said loudly and very distinctly, close to his ear, 'You are very miserable, aren't you?'

Kling looked at him with his wide, black, lost animal's eyes and felt the hand on his shoulder. His shoulder twitched and something inside him seemed to be loosening, he felt sick in his stomach, and a sleepy strangeness was coming up at him out of nowhere, turning him tired, or sick.

'Why are you miserable?' he heard the question. 'Something happened to you, didn't it? Something you can't forget, What was that thing?'

Kling saw the doctor standing far too close, bending down almost on top of him. The hand that had hold of his shoulder gripped hard like a trap, the distorted face looked monstrous, foreshortened and suspended beneath painted faces, the eyes glaring, the threat of the mouth opening and shutting. Kling groaned, turning his head from one side to the other to escape from the eyes, but the eyes would not let him go. He felt the strangeness of sleep or sickness or death moving up on him, and then something gave way in his chest, the stone shifted, and sleep came forward to the foot of the couch, and he groaned again, louder, clutching his chest, crumpling the shirt and the red tie over his breastbone.

'Was it something bad that was done to you?' he heard the doctor's voice shout in his ear.

He felt himself turning and twisting on the hard bed, twisting away from the eyes and the voice and the gripping hand that was shaking him now. He shut his eyes to escape, but a salt prick of tears or sweat forced them open, he did not know where he was or what was happen-

ing to him, and he was afraid. He was very frightened with the strange sleep so near him, he wanted to call for help, it was hard for him to keep silent. But somewhere in the midst of fear existed the thought, They've taken everything; let them not take my silence. And the queer thing was that Williams was somehow a part of this, his smile, the cigarette, and what he had spoken.

'Was it something bad that *you* did?' Kling heard.

He did not feel the hand that was shaking his shoulder. He only felt his face wet, and on the other side of sleep a voice kept on moaning while another voice shouted. But he could not listen because, just then, the stone moved quite away from his breast and sleep came up and laid its languid head on his breast in place of the stone.

He tried to look at the strange sleep, to know it, but it had no form, it simply rested sluggishly on him, like gas, and all he could see above was a cloud of faces, the entire earth was no graveyard great enough for so many, nor was there room to remember a smile or a cigarette or a voice any more.

The old man was there and had been for some time, not sprawled in leaves now but standing, bent forward, listening; and Kling knew that this time something must pass between them, there was something which must be said by him, in extenuation, or in entreaty, to which the old man must reply: though what it was that had to be said, or what words would be found to express it, did not appear yet.

The old man bent over him and blood dripped on to his face and he could not move because of what lay on his breast, and when the old man saw he could not move he bent lower still and Kling could see the tufts of bristly hairs in his father's nostrils. He knew he would have to speak soon, and, staring wildly, with the old man's face almost on his, he could see the side of the face that was only a bloodied hole and he heard a sudden frantic gasp and gush of words in his own language, and that was all he heard because at that moment sleep reached up and covered over his face.

Dr. Pope and the nurse had both seen that Kling was going to start talking. The doctor had seen it coming for about half a minute and waited intently. The nurse looked expectant. When the first sounds came both of them had moved forward at once and the doctor had bent lower over his patient, but now they stepped back from the couch.

'I was afraid that might happen,' Dr. Pope said in his irritable voice. 'Damned annoying, I suppose there's no one in the place who could translate?'

'I'm afraid not,' the nurse said.

'Exasperating,' the doctor said. 'So we can't get anything out of him after all.'

'I'm afraid not,' the nurse said again.

'Most frustrating and disappointing,' said Dr. Pope. 'Oh, well, it's no good trying to work on him now.'

## *The Tattie Dressers*

FRED URQUHART

They were going to dress Gladstones at the pit near the old sand-stone quarry. It was just after seven o'clock on a bleak, cold April morning. While the men were taking the Potato Sorter off the lorry, the women and the loon started to tattir the pit which stretched uphill over the brow of the field like a furrow thrown over by a giant plough. Maggie Jane straddled on the top and shovelled down the earth, uncovering the straw. She was wearing a crimson waterproof pixie-cap which was almost the same colour as her pretty, round face. It was so cold that even she was silent for once. But as she got warmer she began to speak about how much syrup she had got from the Co-operative van the day before. 'A pund, Mrs. Strachan! Hoo long dae they think that's goin' to last me and the loon?' she cried, her dark eyes flashing vivaciously. 'The vanman said I widna get ony mair till the fourth o' May.'

Mrs. Strachan said, 'Ay, ay,' every now and then and went on unhapping the pit. She was a thin, wiry woman with a brown face and grey hair pulled tightly under an old black felt hat. She shovelled the dirt briskly; always three jumps ahead of Maggie Jane. The loon worked steadily, not listening to his mother's chatter. He was a sturdy boy of fourteen with fine eyes like his mother's.

After the men had got the Potato Dresser into place, they set to tattiring the pit, too. In no time they had done more than the women and the loon. When they had taken off the first half dozen yards of earth, old Ake said they had better begin to take off the straw. Young Dod and Chae were forking it off at one side when they heard Maggie Jane exclaim from the other: 'My Christ, look at this! Come on awa' hame!'

'What's adae wi' ye, wifie?' Chae called.

She was standing with her graip in one hand, staring down at the potatoes she had uncovered. 'Goad Almichty!' she said slowly.

The two young men grinned at each other. Dod pushed back his cap and scratched his short curly fair hair, 'Dinna stand lookin' at them, wifie!' he said. 'Bend yer back! Or can ye nae bend for yer stays?'

'She hasna got stays on by the look o' her,' Chae grinned.

'But I have sut,' Maggie Jane said with a perky toss of her pixie-cap.

'Ye have nut!' Chae imitated her high-pitched voice.

'I have sut,' she said. 'Would ye like to see?'

'No, we'll leave that to Ake!' Chae winked at Dod and spat on his hands before forking off another bunch of straw.

Mrs. Strachan and Maggie Jane stood and shook their heads. The potatoes were so badly frosted that they were welded together in a black pulp, smooth and mottled as a snake's skin. They were like prunes that had been dipped in syrup. Many of them had white and yellow fungus-spots on them. The stench was appalling. Maggie Jane held her nose as she bent down and began to pick gingerly at them. 'Ye'd need yer gas-mask on for this job, Mrs. Strachan!'

'Ay, they're gey lads, thae,' old Ake said, bending down and digging his hands into the black morass. 'They need a blitz!'

'Oh, we'll gi'e them that a' richt,' said Maggie Jane.

'Ay, we'll just ha'e to dae oor best to get rid o' them. They're only fit for swine to work amongst. But farm servants are just swine, ony-wye,' Ake added, grinning maliciously. 'They're awfa fine fowk the now, but just wait till the war 's ower!'

'That'll dae ye noo!' Maggie Jane laughed.

'Ay, ay,' Mrs. Strachan said. 'Ye've been a farm servant long enough yersel'.'

'Forty years,' Ake shook his head mournfully. 'I was nae as auld as the loon here when I started.'

When they had picked off the worst of the frosted potatoes they wiped their mucky hands on the straw and sacks. 'Eh, but it's richt cauld on the fingers,' Maggie Jane said.

'Ay, ay,' Mrs. Strachan said, stepping on the flat box beside the elevator of the Potato Sorter. Maggie Jane stood beside her and they stamped their feet on the box, waiting for young Dod to start scooping the potatoes into the machine. Ake put on sacks for the Seed, and Chae threaded a long needle with binder's twine. The loon put down wicker sculls for the Brock and got the bags ready for the Ware.

'Are ye ready, Dod?' Ake started the engine, and when it was going steadily Mrs. Strachan pushed over the handle. There was a rattle as Dod scooped in the first lot of potatoes.

Ake leaned on the end of the machine and watched the potatoes sliding up the elevator towards him. 'Ay, they're gey lads, thae,' he

said, watching the women's hands dart out and in, picking out the frosted ones and throwing them away. 'Dae ye ken fut they mind me on?' He deftly unhooked the first sack to be filled and dumped it on the weighing-machine. 'It minds me on yon movin' staircase in London. Eh, ye never saw such a thing! Ye just need to stand ontill't and it moves up, takin' ye along wi' it. Thae tatties are gey like the fowk ye see standin' on the staircase. They're a gey mixed breed.'

'Ay, ay,' Mrs. Strachan said, without looking up from the potatoes. They were all used to Ake's reminiscences about London which he had visited once for a Cup Final years before.

'Here, here, wifie, dae ye see that!' Chae took a frosted potato out of the bag he was sewing and held it up in front of Maggie Jane's nose.

'Ay, I see it,' she said. 'I thocht I'd let ye ha'e it.'

Ake frowned as he saw what was coming up the elevator. 'Here's a lot o' gey bubbly-nosed lads!'

'Ay, put it off, put it off!' Maggie Jane cried frantically, her blue-fingered mittened hands lost amongst the rotten tatties piling up in front of her.

Mrs. Strachan pushed back the handle and the elevator stopped. And for two or three minutes the women picked out the rotten potatoes, making exclamations of disgust as they squashed to pulp in their fingers.

'A' richt noo?' Ake said, and Mrs. Strachan said 'Ay, ay,' and started the elevator again, 'Nae sae fast, Dod!' she called.

'They're gettin' better,' she said after a while, 'They're nae sae weet noo.'

'It's nae afore time,' Maggie Jane said. 'Ma bloody hands are freezin'.'

Occasionally the men swung their arms, slapping their thighs and shoulders to get some heat into their cold fingers. But the women contented themselves with stamping their feet on the box.

'I wish the sun would come oot,' Maggie Jane said.

'It would just bring ower the Jerries,' Ake said. 'It's better to stay cloudy.'

'I wonder where they were last night?' Mrs. Strachan said.

'Ye dinna need to worry yersel',' Ake said, 'I divna think they'll bother themsels payin' a veesit to the Howe o' the Mearns.'

'Begod they'd better nae!' Maggie Jane said.

'Fut would ye dae noo, wifie, if they did!' Ake asked, throwing away a frosted potato that the women had let past them.

'Christ, I'd just dive right under the dresser,' Maggie Jane grinned. 'I'd even dive under the frosted tatties!'

After Dod had been scooping for half-an-hour there was such a big space between the dresser and the pit that he cried: 'We'll ha'e to shift

the cuddy!' So Chae scooped out the dirt and potatoes that had accumulated under it, and then they all pushed. The machine moved slowly up the slope. It would not sit evenly, so they had to put sacks under the wheels. 'Are ye ready, you wifies?' Ake shouted to the women who were kneeling beside the two back wheels with folded sacks in their hands. 'Noo, lift!' And the men strained, waiting for the women to put in the cleek-brakes in the holes in the wheels. 'Come on, wifie!' Chae called to Maggie Jane. 'Can ye nae find the hole?' And he muttered something to Ake that made the old man guffaw ribaldly.

'Fut was that?' Maggie Jane cried, dusting the earth from her knees.

But Chae merely grinned and said to Dod: 'It's ma turn for the scoop.'

'Whit aboot gi'en us a shottie?' Maggie Jane asked. 'We're that cauld standin' here.'

'Ay, ay,' Mrs. Strachan said. But Chae grinned and flung a scoopful of potatoes into the dresser. And the women, after running to fling their scullfulls of Brock on the Brock pile, went back to their box.

'Hoo are ye gettin' on wi' the Ware, loon?' Ake asked, threading the needle. 'Are ye managin' to get them into the wagon?'

'Nae bad,' the loon said.

'There was a whilie there when I thocht ye looked real trauchled,' Ake said. 'The wagon's gey heich for ye. Maybe Dod would take a shottie o' it for a while and ye can shoo the bags.'

Another half-hour passed. It still remained dull and the wind blew the dust off the potatoes into their faces. About half-past eight it began to rain. The wind drove it into the women's backs, and they huddled their heads into their collars. 'It winna last long,' Mrs. Strachan said. 'It's just an April shower.'

But the rain fell heavier and heavier. Their clothes began to stick to their shoulders and arms. 'The joys o' bein' a farm servant!' Ake said, brushing the raindrops off his lean brown face.

'April showers bring forth May flowers!' Maggie Jane laughed.

'Ay, we'll get flowers quick enough if this rain lasts,' Dod said. 'On our graves!'

They all laughed and repeated this, and Chae stopped scooping to ask what they were laughing at. He came up beside the elevator and looked down at the potatoes. 'Dae ye see that, Mrs. wifie?' He held a potato that Maggie Jane had missed in front of her nose. 'Dae ye see that? Fut dae ye think the mannie would say if he'd gotten that among his Seed?'

'Go to hell!' Maggie Jane said in exasperation.

'Go to hell yersel'!'

'I'll gang soon enough,' she said, laughing. And she leaned on the edge of the elevator and said: 'Did ye hear the bar aboot Hitler?'

They all listened, but the machine was making so much noise and she laughed and giggled so much, running her words together, that they couldn't make out what she was saying. 'Put it off, Mrs. Strachan,' Ake said.

'Well, it was like this,' said Maggie Jane. 'Hitler and Churchill and Mussolini a' died and went to Hell. The Devil asked hoo many lies they had tellt, so Churchill tellt him and the Devil said he was to run aince roond Hell. Then Mussolini tellt him and the Devil said he was to run three times roond Hell. Then he turned to ask Hitler hoo mony lies he had tellt. But Hitler was awa' for his bicycle!'

When they had stopped laughing and repeating the joke, Chae began to chaff Maggie Jane about how often she would need to run round Hell. 'Ye'll need new tyres for yer bike afore ye're half feenished,' he said.

'I will nut,' she said.

'Ye will sut!' he said, leaning forward and grinning mischievously in her face. 'Ye're a gey lass!'

'Ye're a gey lad yersel',' she said. 'I doot a bike'll be nae guid for ye.'

'No, I'll need a motor-car!'

'I'll sell ye mine!'

'It's a car I want,' he said. 'Nae a bloody go-car!'

And he laughed and went back to scooping. Ake looked round to see how the loon was getting on with the sewing of the sacks of Seed. 'Eh, John, but I doot we'll ha'e to gi'e somebody else that job,' he said. 'Ye're nae managin' weel ava. Can ony o' you wifies shoo bags?'

'Ay, I'll take a shottie,' Maggie Jane said.

'Dinna let her dae it,' Chae roared. 'She tried it the other day and she sewed hersel' to the bag!'

'I did nut,' Maggie Jane said with dignity, stepping off the box and taking the needle from the loon.

'Ye did sut!' Chae called.

She sewed industriously, frowning as she pushed the long thick needle through the sacking. 'Hurry up, wifie!' Ake said with a laugh as he put another sackful on the machine. 'Ye're fa'in' ahint!'

And when he dumped the next sackful on the weighing-machine he grinned when he saw that Maggie Jane was still frowning over the first bag. 'It's a guid job that this is nae piece-work,' he said. 'Or ye widna ha'e much in yer envelope at the end o' the week.'

He leaned on the end of the dresser and watched Mrs. Strachan picking the potatoes. Occasionally he put out his hand and picked one

that she had missed. But it was seldom that he needed to do this; she was an expert, her arms flying out and in like pistons, throwing the potatoes on the ground on the other side of the dresser or into the sculls. Dod picked the Ware opposite her and whenever his sacks were full he unhooked them and carried them on his back, emptying them into the wagon. The loon emptied the sculls of Brock and attended to the Chats which came out of a hole at the side of the potato sorter.

'Is it nae near piece time?' Mrs. Strachan asked without looking up from the potatoes rolling upward in front of her.

Ake took a metal watch with a dingy yellowish glass out of his trousers-pocket and scanned it. 'It wants five meenits to nine,' he said.

'Well, we'll ha'e oor piece when we've feenished this bit,' Mrs. Strachan said. 'While you lads are shiftin' the dresser.'

'Ah, but that'll nae dae,' Dod said, 'Ye'll ha'e to shove wi' the rest o' us.'

'I ken somebody that's fairly shovin' the noo.' Ake looked round and grinned at Maggie Jane who was struggling to keep in time with him. Three bags were standing beside the weighing-machine waiting to be sewed. 'It's nae the bags she's shoo'in'—it's the arse o' ma breek's!'

'Well, ye should keep yer big dock oot o' the way!' Maggie Jane retorted. 'And, onywye, ma hands are that cauld they can hardly haud the needle.'

'Never mind, Maggie Jane,' said Mrs. Strachan. 'Here's the sun comin' oot.'

The women huddled in the lee of the Ware wagon and ate their piece while the men shifted the dresser. By the time they had finished, the sun was shining quite brightly. Maggie Jane lifted her skirts and gave a few skips as she came back to her place on the box. 'Oh, the nightingale sang in Berkeley Square!' she skirled.

'It's nae a nightingale that's singin' at the Barns o' Dallow, onywye,' Chae grinned. 'It's a gey auld hen.'

'And here's a worm for ye!' he cried, throwing it at her.

Maggie Jane wriggled her shoulders with disgust. 'Eh, Chae, ye dirty devil!' And she aimed a kick at him with her wellington boot. He juked round her and skelped her playfully on the bottom. She chased him round the dresser, but she turned and ran in the opposite direction when he picked up the worm again and held it in front of her. He smacked his lips and said: 'This would gang fine wi' thae frosted tatties!'

'Feech!' Maggie Jane made her eyes cross with disgust.

'We'll maybe ha'e to eat waur yet,' Ake said. 'Ye never ken. They had to eat dogs in Germany in the last war.'

'Well, I nivir!' Maggie Jane exclaimed.

'There's some fowk eatin' dogs the now,' Chae said. 'They tell me that the Polish sodgers at Auchencairn ha'e eaten a wifie's dog.'

Maggie Jane and Mrs. Strachan would not believe this, but Chae swore that it was true. 'The doggie's disappeared,' he said. 'Ay,' and he grinned and winked to Ake, 'and it's nae only doggies the Poles are eatin'! Ane o' them bit a woman doon by Stonehaven!'

'Well, I nivir!' cried Maggie Jane. Then she looked at Chae and said: 'Ach, he did nut.'

'He did sut!'

'Ye're a richt leeар, Chae,' Mrs. Strachan said, without looking up.

'It's richt, isn't it, Ake?'

'Ay, it's richt,' Ake said, leaning on the edge of the sorter and spitting into a bag. 'The Pole took a richt lump oot o' her. He was walkin' her oot and they had a row, so he ups and bites her. There's to be a coort case ower the head o' it.'

'Well, a' I can say is that it serves the bitch bloody well right,' Maggie Jane said decisively. 'She's got nae mair than she deserved for goin' oot wi' ane o' thae bloody foreigners.'

'Ye'll ha'e to watch yersel' the next time ye gang to the pictures,' Chae said. 'See and nae sit doon aside a Pole. Ye'd never ken fut he might dae in the dark.'

'No, for he'd ha'e a lot o' territory to work on!' Ake said.

'There's nae danger,' Maggie Jane tossed her head. 'I'm havin' nothin' to dae wi' ony bloody Pole.'

They were almost ready to shift the dresser again when they heard a sound above the rattle of the engine. Three aeroplanes were zooming across the sky towards the coast. 'Spitfires!' said Ake.

'They're nae,' Chae said. 'They're Blenheims.'

'Nae, they're Hurricanes,' said Dod.

Mrs. Strachan was the only one who did not look up. She went on picking. Maggie Jane craned her neck until the planes were out of sight. 'It's a guid job they're nae Jeeries. onywye,' she said, turning her attention to the potatoes.

'They might be for a' ye ken,' Ake said.

'No, they're Hurricanes,' Dod said.

'Listen!'

Mrs. Strachan stopped picking. 'Listen!' she cried again.

There it was unmistakably: the wail of the siren in Auchencairn. 'Goad Almighty!' Maggie Jane said. 'That's surely somebody wi' an awfa sair guts after their breakfast!'

They worked on steadily. One or two aeroplanes flew high over-

head, but they knew by the sounds that they were British machines. Suddenly there was a rattle like machine-gun fire. 'Maircy on us!' cried Maggie Jane. 'Fut was that?'

'A stane's got caught in the elevator,' Ake said. 'Put it off, Mrs. Strachan.'

They all peered under the rollers, looking for the stone. Mrs. Strachan seized the opportunity to get down on her knees and pick up some of the Brock that hadn't gone into the sculls.

'There it is,' Maggie Jane cried. 'See, doon there!'

'Ay, she kent where it was a' the time,' Chae grinned. 'For it was her that did it! She's been workin' for that a' mornin'. Sabotage!'

'I did nut,' Maggie Jane cried indignantly.

'But ye did sut!' he grinned and slapped her on the bottom.

Maggie Jane picked up a frosted potato and threw it at him. But he ducked and the potato went into the Ware wagon. 'Bullseye!' he cried.

Mrs. Strachan laughed and began to sing: 'He gets the bullseye! Oh, what a clever young man! He gets the highest score out of a possible eighty-four! Because I love him!'

'He simply is divine!' Ake joined in, driving the needle through the sack in time. 'And I'm going to marry the man who gets a bullseye every time!'

'Ay, I doot that dates us, Mrs. Strachan,' he said. 'They hinna got sangs like that nooadays.'

'No, there's a lot o' blethers o' sangs nooadays,' she said. 'Such daft-like words they've got and a' this shakin' their shoothers and a'.'

'Ach away!' Chae said. 'There was nae guid sangs when you were young.'

'That's right, Charles,' said Maggie Jane in a very polite accent. 'Maircy on us! Fut was that?' she cried suddenly, lapsing again into broad Mearns speech.

They all stood and listened to the echo of the crash. A flock of crows flew upwards, startled, from a clump of fir-trees. The whirring of their wings continued the sound for a few seconds, then there was silence. Mrs. Strachan had put off the machine to listen.

'That's either a bomb,' Ake said. 'Or a plane down.'

'I thocht for a meenit it was Maggie Jane fa'in' intil a bag,' Mrs. Strachan said. 'I looked up expectin' til see her heels stickin' oot o' the bag.'

'I wonder what it could be?' Maggie Jane said.

'Ach, we'll soon find oot,' Ake said. 'Put it on again, Mrs. Strachan. We maun get thaе Seed dressed, war or nae war.'

In the afternoon they heard that it was a German plane that had been brought down three miles on the other side of Auchencairn. The pilot, a loon of nineteen, had been killed instantly.

'Puir bastard!' old Ake said, throwing aside a frosted potato. 'He was somebody's bairn.'

## *Leather-Jaws*

A. G. MORRIS

William Cutler looked at himself in the glass, not because he was vain but because he was plain. And he knew it. He was plain and dull. Jane Eyre, the little governess, managed to have subtle and astringent appeal. She had the ugly-charm of some actors. She won her Rochester, cigar and all. Cutler, the curate, was not like that.

He was imprisoned in his bodily make-up, like a man permanently cast for the part of a pachydermatous clergyman.

So now he looked at his leathery face in the mirror, after shaving, and even to himself the reflected image gave no hint of his invisible soul, sensitive to every pinprick....

It had always been the same. No contacts. Always that barrier. Always....

His mind was flooded with an uprush of Christian love and fellowship, and then—somehow—a bottleneck. Nothing could get through, or if it did get through it became distorted and ridiculous . . . ludicrous jokes and patronising manners....

'Hallo, you lads! What's the difference between a potato and a tomato?'

'Dunno, sir.'

'Well, the one has eyes, and the other—er—hasn't.'

No laugh. It had sounded quite funny once. Must have left something out.

Very soon Cutler was going to be a chaplain. Change of work. Change of scene. Man among men. Good! Things ought to be better. No more parish visiting. No more mothers' meetings, or boys' clubs and choir outings, where people were sick in paper bags coming home in the charry.... Cutler hoped that his face might gain a resolute military stamp. But he was doubtful. Just the same old pudding in a Service cap? More likely.

'Anyhow, I volunteered,' he thought. 'I'm doing my bit; more than some.'

For his vicar was taking on a new curate in his place, a young fellow with personality and polish, who preferred comfort to camping.

'To be quite honest,' the vicar had said to his new colleague, 'Cutler cuts no ice. This is a good opportunity to make the change decently.'

'Absolutely. Of course, I should go myself, sir, but my heart, you know, my heart....'

At last Cutler was gone. He was thirty-nine and he had worked hard, all his life. Every street had been visited in his district. Every household was card-indexed. Every sermon was written in full and classified....

Yet in a month everyone welcomed the new curate, with his pink face and deliberately boyish laugh, and Cutler was forgotten. Even the old and lonely had found him tedious. He sat in their rooms, by the beds, tongue-tied, except for long selected prayers. Prayers so correct, so appropriate and yet so wearisome. All taken from a well-thumbed book.... Prayer after an operation. Prayer before an operation. Prayer for a sick child. Prayer for one who has gone astray. Prayer at the twilight of life.... Poor Cutler. Poor opaque Cutler.

Now he was an officer. Three black stars on his shoulders. He had been a fortnight at a training course, in a herd of parsons, of every shape and religious colour. Test sermons had been preached to imaginary troops, and Cutler's effort was massacred by an onslaught of destructive criticism.... 'If I were on parade I shouldn't have understood a word...' 'Dull...' 'Old-fashioned...' 'Written address no good...' 'Far too long...' 'Turn the chaps against religion...' 'Far too theological...' 'Dreadfully parsonic.' Not encouraging for Cutler! All these younger men tearing him to ribbons, and not a word of comfort.

It wasn't going to be easy with the Infantry Battalion. Cutler was nervous. In spite of hard work his life had been sheltered. Decent room. Godly landladies. Texts on the wall. Parochial organisations. Churches, vestries and institutes. These things had been his bricks and mortar.

And now he was afraid of gambling, drinking, swearing and worse.... Could he cope with it all? Irreligion and immorality? The unknown.

'I'll try,' he thought. 'I'll work. I'll love them all, from Colonel to Private. Help me, O Lord, in this cure of souls....'

And so he came to his first unit, wooden and utterly sincere. He reported to the Adjutant and met the Colonel. Everybody was so polite at first, out to help.... 'Evening, Padre. Have a drink? Got a

batman yet?' 'Tired after your journey, Padre? We'll fix you up with a good room. What'll you have?'

Cutler felt their kindness and he tried to respond, cursing himself for a dummy and a dolt. Then a ghastly joke slipped out.

'Sorry,' he said. 'T.T. from birth, mother's milk. Ha! ha!'

'Get the Padre some lime,' said the Adjutant quickly and he tried another tack.

'I expect you're a great hand at entertainments, Padre? The men get nothing here now.'

Cutler sweated, What could he say? God save him from awful jocularity... like a gramophone record....

'My instrument's the Jew's Harp,' he heard himself saying 'Funny for a parson, what? Jew's Harp! Oh, God! It was appalling, and then he saw the C.O. standing there, Colonel Jacobson... terrible brick....

'Sorry, sir,' he muttered.

'My dear Padre, what *are* you talking about?' said the Colonel. 'Come and dine. I'm afraid it's very rough and ready. We've had no Padre for a month. Hildreth was amazing, did all our Mess shopping—chose the wines. I wonder if...?'

Nightmare... Food... Wines... What else? Dance bands and partners! Lord help him—yes!

'Why,' said Colonel Jacobson. 'Hildreth actually sent in transport once and brought in fifty Woolworth girls for a dance! Stout effort. Some smashers among them too. Good stroke.'

'Chaplain's work... scarcely?' hesitated Cutler.

'Good of the unit, my dear man. Welfare! Keep up morale as well as morals! Cigarette?'

'Sorry. Don't smoke much,' said Cutler. 'Do all I can for the men. Try hard. Got no parlour tricks.'

'That's all right,' said the C.O. 'We'll have a full-dress parade on Sunday to warm you up!' He turned to the Adjutant. 'C.O.'s Parade at eleven, Pig-Face, every man available, you included, you old so-and-so.'

'Thanks,' said Cutler. 'Good of you. Very decent....'

They were trying so desperately to give him a flying start. And somehow he met every advance in the wrong way. The frightful flippancy or the ill-timed rebuke.

'The men are a fine lot of chaps,' said a subaltern. 'Bloody good.... Sorry, Padre.'

'Freely forgiven,' said Cutler.

'Christ!' muttered somebody over a gin and mixed. Cutler heard and flushed. Couldn't let it pass... do his duty.

'Take not the name in vain,' he said with a rush.

'Frightfully sorry,' said the offender. 'Rotten form.'

Cutler improved the situation in mental agony.

'Conviction not convention!' he said. 'Hold that fast. Conviction not convention. Seed thought....'

In an awkward silence he walked out of the Mess and to his lonely room . . . isolated. . . . His whole existence became an isolation. He knew what the music ought to sound like, but inevitably his technique was at fault, blurring and blundering. He worked and worked. He visited all the men in barrack rooms. He went to their canteen or to the Sick Bay. He threw pitiful darts and perpetrated his dreadful jokes. He flung out his catch phrases.

'Good story about an actor! Went on as Hamlet and came off as omelette! Ha! ha!'

'Religion should be caught, not taught.'

'Very good, sir. Yes, sir.'

And when he was gone . . . unprintable!

'Old Leather-Jaws . . . Church Parade? Jesus Christ! . . . Run a bloody mile....'

He had the awful courage of a really good man. He did most desperate and fantastic deeds. He sang a solo at a concert, sandwiched between an unspeakable comedian and a Rabelaisian raconteur. He both sang and protested. He played in a game of humiliating football and was carried off for dead. He rebuked the Commanding Officer for playing poker in the Mess. He strained his voice at open-air services. He limped along on route marches. He wrote his sermons word for word and all the pages blew away on the parade ground. He went on 'schemes'. He returned salutes without his hat on. For none of these things did he gain any credit. And he loved the whole Battalion, yearning over every soul, struggling to make his affection felt, but without any light filtering through the opaque screen of his flesh. . . . It had to end. Goodwill has limits. The C.O. tried hard. The Adjutant tried. They all bore up for months, more or less silently. Then polite requests were sent through a Senior Chaplain to higher authorities. All very discreet. Most gentlemanly....

'Not quite suitable. A little old for the Infantry. Most earnest and sincere . . . but . . .'

But . . .

Cutler had become an Army problem. . . .

Where could Cutler be posted?

Earnest and sincere . . . but . . . ?

Where?

The authorities were both kind and tactful, conscious of sterling worth... no skeletons in Cutler's cupboard....

So he was given a car and a driver, and he was sent to visit, first searchlight posts, and then A.A. gun sites.

'A fine opportunity, Cutler,' the senior chaplain had said. 'These men are lonely. They welcome a chaplain....'

'Yes, sir. I'll leave no stone unturned.'

'I'm sure you won't. Good luck.'

These men welcome a chaplain....

That phrase haunted Cutler.

Now his driver had the vague lay idea that parsons only work on Sundays. He had hoped for a cushy job. Cutler taught him otherwise. Cutler drove daily for miles, seeking his sheep, studying his ordnance maps... reading and praying in spirit as he went from place to place.

He visualised the little groups of isolated men, waiting to welcome their chaplain. He loved them in Christ. He prepared addresses for them, carried prayer cards and tracts.... He knew what he longed to say....

And then, at the Searchlight or in the Gun Pit, he was either dumb or dreadfully talkative to the men, who suffered him so politely and so stonily: brown-faced men in battle-dress, who said, 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,' very correctly. Hunks of unresponsive humanity. Nothing can be so tragic as the garrulity of the shy man, when words pour out of him in a torrent.... Then perhaps a cup of tea and embarrassment with some cheerful young officer, who had a date with a girl, and was cursing the chaplain, looking at his wrist-watch.

'Cheerio, Padre. Good of you to come. Look us up again.... Thank God.... Smith, where's my belt? Smith! Where the hell are you?'

Humbly, night and morning, Cutler knelt to pray and to ask forgiveness for his failures.

'Lord, be merciful to thy servant. Lord, forgive my short-comings. Teach me to be a more fruitful disciple. Lord, let the love of God burn in me and through me.... Punish me, if I have denied Christ.' And even in prayer comfort was withheld from Cutler. His very devotions were arid.

'Speak, Lord!' he would cry, sleepless in the night. And there was silence.

He burned to help man and he was despised. He sought help from God and there was no answer. Or *was* there?

For Cutler had always strength and faith to press on. The divine love was in him, more hidden than radium in pitchblende, secret and splendid. But he remained an Army problem.

Infantry. Searchlights. Ack-ack. All had been tried.

'What can we do with Cutler, sir?' said the senior chaplain to the Deputy Assistant Chaplain General.

'Might do some good in a General Hospital?'

'Well, if the troops are in bed they can't run away from him,' said the Senior Chaplain.

'I think Cutler's a good chap,' said the D.A.C.G.

'But a menace,' commented the S.C.F.

'Yes, a tragic menace. "Leather-Jaws" they call him, and other less polite names....'

They sent him to a hospital and he went overseas. He hoped and prayed so eagerly that in the wards, visiting the sick and wounded, he would find a real niche. The men would be more receptive, more spiritual perhaps? And when he came to them they touched him profoundly. Their pale faces. Their poor bodies imprisoned in plasters. Legs upraised and pulled with great weights. Draining lungs. Stumps of amputated arms or legs. Burns, grotesquely dyed blue.

Cutler yearned over them, longing to assuage all pain, to give sleep and peace, to lay on the healing hands of Christ. ....

He struggled grimly to tell them all his heart and still his words were as travesties of truth, seen in distorting mirrors. He remained Leather-Jaws and Pudding Face or Holy Poker.

His ministrations tired the men and bored them.

'E means orl right, but 'e wikes me up and just stands there mum, or says a prayer abaat me being a sinner....'

'Tries to be funny sometimes. That's the worst of all. Just can't laugh. Something about a monkey and a mermaid, both having tails.'

But his devotion was boundless. Night after night he would give up sleep to be with a dying man at the last. No man should die alone. And Cutler was there. To absolve. To bless. To commend to the Almighty.

'Go forth, O Christian soul....'

In the Mess he lived his usual isolated life. Most people were kind enough to him, but he had no gift for friendship. More and more he was left to himself and he spent all his spare time in his slit of a bedroom. He had no attachments of any kind. He was unmarried and a natural celibate, looking at women as if they were unreal. Some of the sisters made a butt of him openly, and they had the help of Major Oates.

Oates was a huge, red-headed bull of a man, who chased every girl who was not actively hideous. All his appetites were big. One night he came into the Mess well plastered, and started in on near-the-knuckle stories, guffawing and roaring.

For once Cutler was still in the Mess, and his awful courage drove him on to rebuke and testify.

'Drink and filth,' he said. 'I warn you that the wages of sin is death.'

'Don't be a bloody goat,' said Oates.

'I had rather the blood of the scapegoat than your foul tongue,' said Cutler.

Then Oates hit Cutler in the face.

And he turned the other cheek.

'Christ! You've got guts,' said another officer. And Oates humped out of the room, but he never forgave Cutler and never lost an opportunity to humiliate him. Cutler's forbearance maddened him.

'Here comes the bloody saint....'

He even pushed his way into Cutler's room and annoyed him. Misplaced his soap or razor when he wasn't there. Hid his books....

Cutler took to locking his door.

And then one night, very late, Oates came back fighting drunk, shouting and singing.

Suddenly he saw a light in Cutler's room, through a chink in the shutters.

'I'll break his neck,' he roared. 'Turn the other bloody cheek! Let him have it. Jesus Christ. I'll pitch him out of the window, bed and all.'

Oates charged at Cutler's window like a tank and burst his way in through thin shutter and shattered glass. Two friends tried to hold him back.

'Don't be a bloody fool, man.'

'Leave the Padre alone. You don't want to be court-martialled for him. Christ, what an ass!'

'I'm in!' shouted Oates, through a rain of glass. 'I'm in! I'm going to heave the preaching Leather-Face to Kingdom Come.'

His hands and face were bleeding. Oates' friends were in the room now, hanging on to him and arguing.

'You've done enough harm as it is.'

'Come to bed, you ass. The last show was bad enough.'

'I am a willing witness, my friends,' said Cutler, heaping coals of fire. It infuriated Oates. He broke loose and grabbed Cutler by the throat, dragging him towards the window.

The four men were interlocked on the floor. Oates had the strength and savagery of a madman. Cutler offered no resistance.

Oates fought his way to the window against his friends. There was only a drop of two or three feet to the ground outside....

'There he goes!' shouted Oates in triumph. 'Earth to earth, dust to dust! Chucked out like bloody Jezebel!'

'Shut up, you fool.'

'This'll need some hushing up.'

'I don't want to hush it up,' yelled Oates at the great African moon.

Cutler picked himself up and limped round to his room. He was bruised and caked in dust and blood.

'Even for our enemies', he said, 'we must pray.' And he knelt down by his bed.

It was hushed up with difficulty. Cutler refused to make any statement. That helped. The two friends spoke vaguely of a car accident.

'Padre was knocked down. Darned bad luck.'

That did not explain the broken shutters or the noise. Cutler was laid up for a month.

Sprains, cuts and nervous shock.

In hospital he was visited by the senior chaplain, who knew something of the situation.

'Can't you tell me what happened? In confidence.'

'I'd rather not, sir.'

'I'm afraid we shall have to move you, Cutler.' Cutler almost wept.

'Tried hard,' he said. 'Sick and wounded. Touch of Christ. Pierced hand.'

For a moment he almost got through to a fellow-creature.

'Cutler, you're a good chap.'

They made a new job for him.

'You will be resident cemetery-chaplain, taking all C. of E. funerals where no particular padre is asked for, and you will have a good billet near the cemetery.'

'I've failed with the living, so they give me the dead,' thought Cutler bitterly. Then he was ashamed.

'I'll work with zeal, sir,' he said.

Cutler had no illusions about himself. He was a failure, almost a fiasco. A smaller man would have become cynical and sour. Not Cutler. He knew that this new posting had been created to save him from an ignominious return to civilian life. He knew that the authorities were doing their best for him, and so, saint-like, he grasped even at humiliation as part of his pilgrimage. He felt cut off from the living, whose hearts and minds he could never reach, and his whole soul was focused on resurrection, or eternity. Now he was saved at last from the awful struggle to make contacts. And he was glad. No more desperate nervous jokes.... No more painful silences.... No misery in the Mess....

Funeral parties came, respectful to the Chaplain, quiet and orderly. Cutler took the service solemnly, almost beautifully.... The words never stale on his lips.

'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord . . . blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . for they rest from their labours . . .'

His voice caught a ring of fire and triumph. Almost he heard the last trump. This was his parish. A cemetery in North Africa. All still and silent lay his parishioners, the colonels, the captains, the sergeants, the privates . . . all one in Christ . . . Requiescant . . . And Cutler loved them. In the evenings, when all was deserted, he moved round from grave to grave, talking to his people, praying, blessing. . . . He felt that these, at least, must know the reality of his love, for they had passed beyond the veil of the flesh and the mask of his Leather-Jaws. . . . Day and night he meditated upon the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ rose from the dead, and in Him we rise to glories and mysteries. Cutler's mind was flooded with this beauty, and he transformed the ugliness of death into immortal splendour in heavenly places. . . .

Tall and pale, he strode about with burning eyes, crying out aloud, falling suddenly upon his knees. . . .

'Now is Christ risen from the dead!'

'I am the first and the last, and the Living One. . . .'

'I was dead and behold I am alive for evermore. . . .'

'This mortal must put on immortality . . . we shall be changed!'

He had no idea how eccentric, by worldly standards, he had become. Still a problem to the Army.

'Extraordinary bird, that padre at the cemetery. . . .'

He was happy with his friends below ground, and with his dreams ascending far above time and space. . . .

'He'll have to go home,' thought the senior chaplain, and he planned to visit Cutler, to be gentle and tactful. . . . Health, climate, and so on. But the very night before this could take place Cutler put on his robes; his cassock, his surplice, his black scarf. . . .

And Cutler spoke to each of his flock in turn, under the stars, moving as a shepherd and calling his sheep by name.

His voice had become infinitely tender. All embarrassment was gone.

'Captain Williams, now are your wounds healed. Now you are caught up into glory. Now you have found life.'

'George Brown, you were a Private Soldier, now you are a fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God. . . .'

'Edward Hawkins, man of Devon, much pain was your lot, yet you passed through the vale of misery and made it a well of springing water of life.'

And they heard. They listened.

Cutler was sure of that.

The dead listened, because they were alive... their spirits were quickened.

Sympathy, compassion, contact, victory... at last. His mind was soaked in the word of God. And, having made the full circuit of all his friends, Cutler stood exalted in their midst and poured out his soul to the congregation. Yes. They were gathered there, reverent and attentive. He could see them all. Colonel Webber... Captain Williams... Private Brown... Bombardier Hawkins... all of them. His people.

'Brethren and beloved children,' he said fervently. 'All my life I have been a failure. I have been crucified upon a cross of failure. I have eaten and drunk of failure. I have been imprisoned in the flesh, cut off from men and even from God. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! But now I know that the sufferings of this present are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us... Oh, the love of Christ, the light, the life. Sent to the dead, I have found life. Close round me! Embrace me! My blessed cloud of witnesses, hold me fast! Lord, I come. The heavens are opened and I see the Son of God. Oh, blinding beauty.... In the twinkling of an eye, changed, uncorruptible, immortal.... Now shall I see the kingdom and the power and the glory. I am delivered from the body of this death....'

He was all encircled and radiant, a beloved man among his friends. They held out their hands to him. 'Come, come!' Old memories stirred.

'These men will welcome their chaplain....'

Cutler lifted up his eyes to the stars, and they were no longer remote.

There was no pain, but illumination, sudden and overwhelming, and then the Vision, face to face....

## *Waiting*

PADRAIC FALLON

Precisely at nine her father came through the shop door with her small son. The boy promptly disappeared into the iceroom. She followed him and brought him out, a little yelling bundle of fire and fury. In the shop she turned him over her knee and spanked him heartily till her father intervened.

'That'll do now,' he said. 'Give me a comb and we'll trim his top-hamper!'

She let him take the child, her face rich in its smoulder and exasperation. She said: 'You have him utterly spoiled.'

Her father said: 'I'll doll up the curls, young man. Then for one minute you'll stand before that big looking glass and grow a new face without tears on it, then you can go in to see Mary for two minutes by the ship's clock.'

When the boy scuttled off, she faced her father angrily. 'You pamper him, father, and I must spank him. You and mother are utterly, utterly spoiling him.'

Her father smiled at her, his eyes as tranquil as a couple of old monks. 'Nonsense,' he said.

She moved closer to him, so close that the light from the big shop-window threw the rich sullen flush of her face over him like a bowl of rosewater. 'Would you have him grow up like his father?' she asked. 'A vicious homicide?'

Her father's smile grew softer. 'Ah, stop, Jude!' he said. 'You know your man is a decent man.'

'Decent?' she echoed. She stood away from him, almost hissing. 'That's why he's in jail, I suppose? That's why he killed a man in Liverpool, drinking in the dens while his wife waited for him at home? Drinking and fighting and women too, I suppose....'

He lifted his hand quietly, 'Hush!' he said. 'You're putting a nastier complexion on it than the judge did, who was hard enough on him indeed to give him five years for defending himself. Call the child now and we'll be off to our school!'

For a moment she faced him. Then with a shrug of her shoulders she went across to the big mirror and smoothed her face. From the iceroom came the child's chirrup and Mary's laugh. He waited till the fuss went out of her features, then he said, 'Any unfortunate thing, Jude, can happen to any man. It's only the grace of God and your mother's prayers that saved myself.'

In the mirror, her cool every-day mask was on her face once more. She shrugged. 'You were too fond of mother to get into such trouble,' she said. She turned round. 'Oh what does it matter now what happened him, I don't care. I'm only glad to have found him out in time. Now I have my shop. I'm making four times as much as he ever made. And I'm no longer waiting, waiting, waiting, on letters that never come, on ships that are days late, on trains, on trams, on buses. I'm glad to be rid of it for ever.'

She walked past him, her high heels clipclopping on the tiled floor, and went into the iceroom for her son. When she came out her father's face was worried. He took the child from her and went with him to the

door. 'Stand there for a minute, Laddy!' he said. He came back to Jude. 'Are you going to separate from Garry, Jude?' he asked quietly.

'Do you think I could live with him again?' she asked in turn.

'Did you tell him that?' he questioned.

'Certainly. And if he comes home here I'll be glad of the chance to tell it to him once more.'

Her father said: 'He should be out soon.'

'He should be out now', she answered, 'if he got good conduct marks—which I suppose he didn't.'

Her father said: 'You're a good girl, Jude, but you're jealous and very bitter and, and...'

'Yes!' she challenged. 'Go on!'

He said his say quietly. 'You're a bad wife to a seaman,' he finished.

She shrugged again. 'I'm that no longer,' she said. 'I'm a grass-widow now.'

From the window she watched the two of them set out across the Bullring where the weathered bronze statue of the Pikeman, as simple as a ballad, threw his persisting moment of history into the careless busy sunlight. Paddy, her grocery manager, came in with a sheaf of orders, and thrust them before her. 'Come out quick', he said, 'and help me put up the shutters. The dockers are marching again to the shipping office across. There'll be bricks flying a minute.'

'Another strike?' she asked. And he nodded.

She stood at the door watching the black squad crowd the steps before the shipping office while the Ganger, bandy as a barrel, stood on the top step talking quickly with thick emphatic gestures of his heavy shoulders. Having made their protest, however, they dissolved into groups, and with the exception of a picket or two, went away and left the old square to its everyday self.

She had a busy morning of it. Before she felt, it was lunchtime, and she had to relieve Paddy. From the grocery window the small street widened like the mouth of a bell, and the light of the bay, soft with summer cloudfuffs, came over the faded pinks of the cobblestones as quietly as pigeons. Her father was talking to two civic guards at the quay end of the street, there were three more guards under the big lime by the Methodist chapel, and two more came along at that moment and stood outside her door. One of them grinned at her, mopping his brow. 'Whoo!' he said. 'A nice hot day they took to go striking.'

The Pilot ketch, trailing her dinghy, slipped into sight behind the limetree. Then the big coal-boat, with a wash of dirty light astern, made the curve of the river and was gentled expertly to the quayside where a growing crowd of strikers waited for her. The big guard

sighed. 'Always the bit of trouble, ma'am. If you had an old skit that'd fit me now, I'd like well to mind the baby for an hour.'

The two big men, with a common impulse, moved off towards the coal-boat and were soon among the crowd of coal-shifters under her high black stern. The skipper left the bridge window for the rail to have a better look at his well-policed reception. And then she saw another figure come to bridge window and lean out of it in a way that was very familiar to her. Her heart stopped and her eyes opened widely. She watched him while he lounged out through the door to join the captain. She watched him till he vaulted the ladder with all his old casual grace. Then when he disappeared, she went into the shop and shut herself into the office. She was trembling.

But when her father came to accompany her home to lunch, she was laughing with a customer, her colour high, her eyes a dance of bright lights. When they were out on the street he said: 'You say Garry arrived?'

She said, 'Oh, yes.'

'You're still of the same mind, Jude?'

'Of course,' she answered. 'He's an impudent, cocksure blackguard to show himself over here.'

'Hush!' he ordered.

'All right,' she said. 'I'll keep all those noble words for his own ear. Sorry, father.'

And they walked on in silence.

After lunch she went to her room instead of returning to the shop. She lay on the bed for an hour, had a bath then, and did up her hair as if she were going to a dance. She put a fire in the sitting room, and brought her knitting in there. But she was restless. She was as often in the oval of the window, where the chintzes snapped and ballooned, as she was in the big chair. At last she put on her hat and coat and set out for the shop. Her mother did not want her to leave the house. 'Oh Jude!' she wailed. 'If you meet him you'll only start fighting him as you did the day of the Regatta.'

'I'm not going to wait and wait for his lordship,' she answered. 'I've got my business to look after.'

She walked slowly down the steep airy street, her face glowing in the silk of the evening, a cool pride in the calm swing of her shoulders. But she reached the shop without seeing her husband.

Mary had a message for her from Old Jeremy Vaughan, the Receiver of Wreck. 'Would she ask her husband to call for a further two and ninepence salvage money which was owing to him. He had given him 23/6 instead of 26/3.'

Mary said, 'Your father was here, ma'am, and he said he'd see to it himself.'

There was little business doing at this drowsy end of the afternoon. The quayside, lying low in the glitter of the tide, was stone quiet as on a Sunday. Her father came in at six o'clock with a tired face. 'You've been walking too much again,' she said. 'Sit down! You know, father, you're letting me down by tramping the town looking for my husband like that. I won't have it.'

He brooded over her quietly and sternly. Then he said: 'I don't think you realise that your husband must be down and out at all. . . . He'll have to take an A.B.'s berth now if he can get one these days, for there's a lot idle.'

'It will serve him right,' she said. 'Let him be ashamed! Let him sponge on that old fisherman father of his for a few months. Let him lounge around the quays now with his hands in his pockets!'

Her father interrupted her. 'You're a foolish girl,' he said. 'Very well you know he's not that sort of man. He's off in the morning to Merseyside without a halfpenny in his pocket to look for a ship.'

Her face was startled. 'In the morning?' she repeated. There was a quiver in her voice.

Her father stood up. 'Aye,' he said. 'Did you think he was going to try to live on you. I haven't seen him, but I can guess things. He must have made for Barry so as to get a free lift over in the *Raven Star*. He'd want his discharge book, and one he had when he was only A.B., and he'd want a couple of ganzeys and a pair of seaboots and an old reefer. He had those at his father's, the cast-off ones. Shut the shop, now, and we'll go home to our tea.'

In the street, he looked at her with a faint twinkle over the grey sternness of his face. 'He's not going to let you shame him either,' he said. 'He's told nobody that you've cast him off, not even his father. The father thinks he'll be over to you any minute.'

Her face was pale. 'And what do you think?' she asked.

'Maybe he'd take you at your word and not approach you at all. He'll have no money, for he made old Larry take 10/- out of his bit of salvage. And his train fare to Dublin, too, since the strike has spoiled him from getting a lift to the Mersey. Maybe he'll sleep out to-night somewhere since he won't want his people to know what a mess you tried to make of him. If you want him back, Jude, I'm thinking you'll have to bring him back.'

She turned to him choking. 'I'd hang myself first,' she said.

It was a quiet little road where they lived. Time could be counted there after dusk by silences and the hushed feet of lovers as they moved

in and out of the park through the squeaking turnstile. In the sitting-room with the maroon-shaded lamp at her elbow, she knitted away, her face its calm cool self, while her father, nodding in his slippers drowsed over a big volume of Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, turning the pages at intervals that increased gradually as the night wore on until it seemed at last that each page opened on some vague timeless purgatory where the spirit was lost. Soon after the footsteps of passers-by became rarer, and the turnstile, keeping psychic company with her father, squealed only at lengthy intervals. When the steeple belled eleven o'clock, he put the book away and took off his glasses. 'I think,' he said, 'we may as well say the Rosary.'

And just then there was a knock at the door. . . . It was so sudden and loud that she looked up at her father with a startled girl's face. 'I'll open the door,' he said.

But it was only Old Larry, Garry's father, a big shy shambling man. He came in unwillingly, explaining in his shy rumbling voice, that he had only come with Garry's discharge book. Her father, a civil friendly host, poured him a glass of whiskey, which he refused. 'If it's all the same to you, captain,' he said, 'I won't take it.' He handed the book to Jude. 'Isn't it the blessed will of God that I saw it on the table after he leaving? Where would he be without it? And where's the lad at all now, ma'am? Sure I might as well have another look at him before I go, for I have to be out in the south bay in the morning, so I won't be at the train. Ah, many's the time I saw him go, but this is the worst. The old mother crying because she's wake now.'

He looked down at Jude, his face very shy. 'Don't be fretting, ma'am, because he's starting at the bottom again. He'll not stay anchored there, never fear.'

Her father spoke. 'When did he leave your place, Larry?' And the old man replied, 'Not ten minutes before myself. He wouldn't let me come with him and carry the sea-bag. And sure I forgot altogether to tell him you'd moved into the new house, but I suppose you told him yourself and you writing.'

The captain was standing before with a glass. 'You'll have to take this down, Larry.'

'I will not, captain. Sure the boy brought me a sup. Thank you all the same. No, no. I won't take it, captain.'

He was backing to the door all the time. He was turning awkwardly to open it, but instead he shambled back to Jude. He said: 'And the babby, ma'am? The little lad? Sure with all the fuss I was nearly forgetting to ask after him.'

'He's very well,' Jude said.

'You never come to see him at all,' the captain accused. 'You leave me to do all the grandfathering.'

The old fisherman was flustered, 'An old rough fellow like me?' he rumbled. 'Sure the child'd be ashamed to be seen with me.'

He was eyeing Jude like an old gentle collie. And suddenly looking on the wrinkled sweet weather of the big face above her she did an altogether unexpected thing. She put her two hands on his shoulders and shook him softly. 'Come up for him anytime,' she said, 'He'd love to see the boats.'

When he had gone and her father was in bed she sat for a long time with the open Discharge Book in her hand, the stamped snapshot of her husband looking up at her. Time was now a void and she was vaguely surprised when the clock rang two in the street. She stood up, and then she heard the turnstile in the park creak. She stood stock still listening. In a moment she heard them, long lounging footsteps approaching from the park. They approached, and then without faltering they passed, steps that she knew as well as the beating of her own heart. When they died away, she sat down once more at the fire. Her calm had gone, her warm face was bleak as the dying embers.

She was between sleeping and waking when she heard them again. There was a shiver of dawn around the window. She crouched behind the curtain, shaking. Then once more he was passing, a vague shadow in the darkness, tall and intangible, whose only reality was the slow regular recurrence of its footsteps. And then the turnstile wheeled on its squealing hinge again.

In the morning, too early, she went out to seven o'clock Mass, and the turnstile squealed behind her too as she took the park short cut to the chapel. Instead of keeping the path, she crossed the crisp grass to the summer-house by the yew hedge. Slowly, with eager soundless patience, she came to the doorway and looked in.

He was there!

He was lying on the slatted bench asleep, his sea-bag under his head, and the old reefer round his legs. The faint blue of the cold morning was like a day's beard on his face, and his face, as she pored over it with long quiet breaths charted for her quite plainly the psychic journeys he had made during the years he had been lost to her. Something had unravelled the first careless youth in his features and then pulled the skin too tight. But the face, masked as it was with sleep, was a man's face, and his clothes as always were neat and pressed-looking, and the shoes brightly polished.

The shoes! Even as she stooped to look at the soles her eyes took in the significance of the cardboard that was strewn on the ground beside

him. And the little gold-handled claspknife that lay there too—the toy he had bought when he had first touched at Gibraltar. Yes, there were two large patches of cardboard on the soles of his shoes.

She was trembling now so violently that the vibration, or the cold of the morning, disturbed him and she had to withdraw quickly behind the privet to remain unseen. There she opened her bag and got out the Discharge Book. He was on his feet now, for she heard him stamping and whacking his arms like a cabman to get heat into himself. And then he was moving to the door and she straightened herself to face him. She stood stiffly for a moment with a clenched face. She had time to go forward and make the meeting seem an accident. She didn't. Instead she backed away silently and blindly till the yew trees covered her, and a minute afterwards was racing downhill in the shelter of the edge.

Her father was just coming out of doors to go to Mass. She thrust the Discharge Book on him. 'There's ten pounds there,' she gasped. 'He's in the summer-house above, but you'll have to hurry.'

'Aye!' he said. 'I thought it might be there.'

Then he was looking at her with still veiled eyes. 'Will I say anything to him?' he asked.

'You can tell him that, little as he deserves it, he has a son worth seeing,' she answered.

She went to the chapel the long way round. She stayed in a pew just inside the door so that the Mass in its candles and dim syllables came through the great arches like something on a tiny lens. She left at the Blessing, the first out, the only figure for minutes on the tall upland of the park. But at the squealing turnstile she halted. And five minutes later she was still at the turnstile. And then came the sound of a door opening and the sound of her father's voice and her son's delighted squeal, each seeming, as all voices always seemed in his presence, to be counter-pointing her husband's rich bass. They came into her vision now, her husband with his sea-bag on one arm and her son on the other. At the gate he put his son down, and clapped him softly on the shoulder. 'And you're to be five fathom high when I come home,' he intoned. 'Five fathom by the mark. And you're to have a glass-plated shop and a billycock hat and two bank managers in your waistcoat pocket. And you must be prepared to turn me over to the footman if I ever dare to knock at your big hall door. D'you hear me?'

The child was beating on his shoulders. 'You're to bring me. You're to bring me, Daddy.'

'Well, maybe I will. Maybe I will. But it'll have to be next time,

Sonny. Ease away your hawser, now! Let go, son! There's a train waiting. Here's a bob for you, and be sure you spend it the right way, and remember that doesn't mean putting it in a savings bank or selling it to your mammy for tuppence. Goodbye now, lad!

The child began to howl then and had to be carried in and the door banged on him. But he was all excitement later when she entered, ramming a thousand words at her, while she fiddled about with her breakfast. And her mother was as bad, trotting about with a flush on her face, not knowing what she was doing, complaining, complaining. 'He wouldn't touch a bit of the nice breakfast I had ready, saying he had his breakfast. And he had, too, I suppose. A sailor's breakfast. A Wild Woodbine or a chew of plug tobacco. Oh a nice man you've made of him! A stranger in his own house!'

'This is *my* house, mother,' she said. She was watching the clock, answering automatically, and her mother as if suddenly interpreting her absorption, leaned over the table to her, vivid for once and strangely magnetic.

'If you hurry now, daughter,' she said, 'you'll be just in time to catch them. Look! It's twenty minutes to eight. You've twenty minutes.'

'No!' she said. 'No!'

But when the clock hands showed the quarter before eight, she stood up of a sudden, put on her coat and ran out down town towards the station. Everything around her in the big wide flush of the morning was so vast and fixed and weighty that her own small movements seemed fragile and futile, and the station very far off below her. Already there was a rhythm about the smoke that rose from it, a rising tension, and she hurried, hurried until her breath was something she had left behind and forgotten. But as she clambered up the short cut to the platform she slowed her pace to her usual easy walk, for away, up alongside the engine, in lonely silhouette against the full blaze of the morning, her husband was shaking hands with her father. He saw her all right. He watched her for a moment, and then stepped casually into his compartment and clapped the door after him. She stopped as though he had slapped her face. And in a second or two the train was in motion, rumbling away after its smoke, and she was walking again towards her father.

Outside the station she clutched his arm. 'Oh Daddy! Daddy!' she said. He put her arm through his own. 'We'll be going home to our breakfasts,' he said.

She clutched him again. 'Daddy, I could—I could get a motor to the junction.'

His answer was old and tired. 'You can save yourself the carriage,' he said.

Suddenly she wailed, 'I can't wait! I can't wait, Daddy.'

'God help you!' he said. And then added, soft and old and worn, 'God help the pair of you!'

## *The Orange Grove*

ALUN LEWIS

The grey truck slowed down at the crossroads and the Army officer leaned out to read the sign post. *Indians Only*, the sign pointing to the native town read. *Dak Bungalow* straight on. 'Thank God,' said Staff-Captain Beale. 'Go ahead, driver.' They were lucky, hitting a dak bungalow at dusk. They'd bivouacked the last two nights, and in the monsoon a bivouac is bad business. Tonight they'd be able to strip and sleep dry under a roof, and heat up some bully on the Tommy cooker. Bloody good.

These bungalows are scattered all over India on the endless roads and travellers may sleep there, cook their food, and pass on. The rooms are bare and whitewashed, the veranda has room for a camp bed, they are quiet and remote, tended for the Government only by some old khamsama or chowkey, usually a slippers and silent old Moslem. The driver pulled in and began unpacking the kit, the dry rations, the cooker, the camp bed, his blanket roll, the tin of kerosene. Beale went off to find the caretaker, whom he discovered squatting amongst the flies by the well. He was a wizened yellow-skinned old man in a soiled dhoti. Across his left breast was a plaster, loose and dripping with pus, a permanent discharge it seemed. He wheezed as he replied to the brusque request and raised himself with pain, searching slowly for his keys.

Beale came to give the driver a hand while the old man fumbled with the crockery indoors.

'The old crow is only sparking on one cylinder,' he said. 'Looks like T.B.', he added with the faint overtone of disgust which the young and healthy feel for all incurable diseases. He looked out at the falling evening, the fulgurous inflammation among the grey anchorages of cloud, the hot creeping prescience of the monsoon.

'I don't like it tonight,' he said. 'It's eerie; I can't breathe or think. This journey's getting on my nerves. What day is it? I've lost count.'

'Thursday, sir,' the driver said, 'August 25.'

'How d'you know all that?' Beale asked, curious.

'I have been thinking it out, for to write a letter tonight,' the driver said. 'Shall I get the cooker going, sir? Your bed is all ready now.'

'O.K.' Beale said, sitting on his camp bed and opening his grip. He took out a leather writing pad in which he kept the notes he was making for Divisional H.Q., and all the letters he'd received from home. He began looking among the letters for one he wanted. The little dusty driver tinkered with the cooker. Sometimes Beale looked up and watched him, sometimes he looked away at the night.

This place seemed quiet enough. The old man had warned him there was unrest and rioting in the town. The lines had been cut, the oil tanks unsuccessfully attacked, the court house burnt down, the police had made lathi charges, the district magistrate was afraid to leave his bungalow. The old man had relished the violence of others. Of course you couldn't expect the 11th to go by without some riots, some deaths. Even in this remote part of Central India where the native princes ruled from their crumbling Moghul forts through their garrisons of smiling crophedded little Ghurkas. But it seemed quiet enough here, a mile out of the town. The only chance was that someone might have seen them at the cross roads—it was so sultry, so swollen and angry, the sky, the hour. He felt for his revolver.

He threw the driver a dry box of matches from his grip. Everything they carried was fungoid with damp, the driver had been striking match after match on his wet box with a curious depressive impassivity. Funny little chap, seemed to have no initiative, as if some part of his will were paralysed. Maybe it was that wife of his he'd talked about the night before last when they had the wood fire going in the hollow. Funny. Beale had been dazed with sleep, half listening, comprehending only the surface of the slow, clumsy words. Hate, Hate. Beale couldn't understand hate. War hadn't taught it to him, war was to him only fitness, discomfort, feats of endurance, proud muscles, a career, irresponsible dissipations, months of austerity broken by 'blinds' in Cairo, or Durban, Calcutta or Bangalore or Bombay. But this little rough-head with his soiled hands and bitten nails, his odd blue eyes looking away, his mean bearing, squatting on the floor with kerosene and grease over his denims—he had plenty of hate.

... 'tried to emigrate first of all, didn't want to stay anywhere. I was fourteen, finished with reformatory schools for keeps.... New Zealand I wanted to go. There was a school in Bristol for emigrants... I ran away from home but they didn't bother with me in Bristol, nacherly. ... Police sent me back. So then I become a boy in the Army, in the

drums, and then I signed on. I'm a time-serving man, sir; better put another couple of branches on the fire; so I went to Palestine, against the Arabs; seen them collective farms the Jews got there, sir? Oranges . . . then I come home, so I goes on leave. . . . We got a pub in our family and since my father died my mother been keeping it . . . for the colliers it is . . . never touch beer myself, my father boozed himself to death be'ind the counter. Well, my mother 'ad a barmaid, a flash dame she was, she was good for trade, fit for an answer any time, and showing a bit of her breasts every time she drew a pint. Red hair she had, well not exactly red, I don't know the word, not so *coarse* as red. My mother said for me to keep off her, my mother is a big Bible woman, though nacherly she couldn't go to chapel down our way being she kept a pub. . . . Well, Monica, this barmaid, she slept in the attic, it's a big 'ouse, the Bute's Arms. And I was nineteen. You can't always answer for yourself, can you? It was my pub by rights, *mine*. She was *my* barmaid. That's how my father'd have said if he wasn't dead. My mother wouldn't have no barmaids when he was alive. Monica knew what she was doing all right. She wanted the pub and the big double bed; she couldn't wait. . . . It didn't seem much to pay for sleeping with a woman like that. . . . Well, then I went back to barracks, and it wasn't till I told my mate and he called me a sucker that I knew I couldn't. . . . Nothing went right after that. She took good care to get pregnant. Monica did, and my mother threw her out. But it was my baby, and I married her without telling my mother. It was *my* affair, wasn't it? *Mine.*'

How long he had been in telling all this Beale couldn't remember. There was nothing to pin that evening upon; the fire and the logs drying beside the fire, the circle of crickets, the sudden blundering of moths into the warm zone of the fire and thoughtful faces, the myopic sleepy stare of fatigue, and those bitter distasteful words within intervals of thought and waiting. Not until now did Beale realise that there had been no hard luck story told, no gambit for sympathy or compassionate leave or a poor person's divorce. But a man talking into a wood fire in the remote asylums of distance, and slowly explaining the twisted and evil curvature of his being.

'She told me she'd get her own back on me for my mother turning her out. . . . And she did. . . . I know a man in my own regiment that slept with her on leave. But the kid is mine. My mother got the kid for me. She shan't spoil the kid. Nobody'll spoil the kid, neither Monica nor me. . . . I can't make it out, how is it a woman is so wonderful, I mean in a bedroom? I should 'a' murdered her, it would be better than this, this hating her all the time. Wouldn't it? . . .'

'The Tommy cooker's O.K. now, sir,' the driver said. 'The wind

was blowing the flame back all the time. O.K. now with this screen. What's it to be? There's only bully left.'

'Eh? What?' Beale said. 'Oh, supper? Bully? I can't eat any more bully. Can't we get some eggs or something? Ten days with bully twice a day is plenty, can you eat bully?'

'Can't say I fancy it,' the driver said. 'I'll go down the road and see if I can get some eggs.'

'I shouldn't bother,' Beale said. 'The storm will get you if you go far. Besides, it's dangerous down the town road. They've been rioting since Gandhi and Nehru were arrested last week. Better brew up and forget about the food.'

Beale was by nature and by his job as a staff officer one who is always doing things and forgetting about them. It was convenient as well as necessary to him. His *Pending* basket was always empty. He never had a load on his mind.

'I'll take a walk just the same,' the driver said. 'Maybe I'll find a chicken laying on the road. I won't be long.'

He was a good scrounger, it was a matter of pride with him to get anything that was wanted, mosquito poles, or water or anything. And every night, whether they were in the forest or the desert plains that encompass Indore, he had announced his intention of walking down the road.

Some impulse caused Beale to delay him a moment.

'Remember', Beale said, 'the other night, you said you saw the collective farms in Palestine?'

'Aye,' said the driver, standing in the huge deformity of the hunch-backed shadow that the lamp projected from his slovenly head.

'They were good places, those farms?' Beale asked.

'Aye, they were,' the driver said, steadying his childish gaze. 'They didn't have money, they didn't buy and sell. They shared what they had and the doctor and the school teacher the same as the labourer or the children, all the same, all living together. Orange groves they lived in, and I would like to go back there.'

He stepped down from the porch and the enormous shadows vanished from the roof and from the wall. Beale sat on, the biscuit tin of water warming slowly on the cooker, the flying ants casting their wings upon the glass of the lamp and the sheets of his bed. An orange grove in Palestine. . . . He was experiencing one of those enlargements of the imagination that come once or perhaps twice to a man, and re-create him subtly and profoundly. And he was thinking simply this—that some things are possible and other things are impossible to us. Beyond the mass of vivid and sensuous impressions which he had allowed the war to impose upon him were the quiet categories of the

possible and the quieter frozen infinities of the impossible. And he must get back to those certainties. . . . The night falls, and the dance bands turn on the heat. The indolent arrive in their taxis, the poppies and the good timers, the lonely good-looking boys and the indifferent erotic women. Swing music sways across the bay from the urbane permissive ballrooms of the Taj and Green's. *In the Mood, It's foolish but it's fun*, some doughboys cracking whips in the coffee room, among apprehensive glances, the taxi drivers buy a betel leaf and spit red saliva over the running board, the panders touch the sleeves of soldiers, the crowd huddles beneath the Gateway, turning up collars and umbrellas everywhere against the thin sane arrows of the rain. And who is she whose song is the world spinning, whose lambent streams cast their curved ways about you and about, whose languors are the infinite desires of the unknowing? Is she the girl behind the grille, in the side street where they play gramophone records and you pay ten chips for a whisky and you suddenly feel a godalmighty yen for whoever it is in your arms? But beyond that, beyond that? Why had he failed with this woman, why had it been impossible with that woman? He collected the swirl of thought and knew that he could not generalise as the driver had done in the glow of the wood fire. Woman. The gardener at the boarding-school he went to used to say things about women. Turvey his name was. Turvey, the headmaster called him, but the boys had to say *Mr. Turvey*. Mr. Turvey didn't hold with mixed bathing, not at any price, because woman wasn't clean like man, he said. And when the boys demurred, thinking of soft pledges and film stars and the moon, Mr. Turvey would wrinkle his saturnine face and say, 'Course you young gentlemen knows better than me. I only been married fifteen years. I don't know nothing of course.' And maybe this conversation would be while he was emptying the ordure from the latrines into the oil drum on iron wheels which he trundled each morning down to his sewage pits in the school gardens.

But in an intenser lucidity Beale knew he must not generalise. There would be perhaps one woman out of many, one life out of many, two things\*possible—if life itself were possible, and if he had not debased himself among the impossibilities by then. The orange grove in Palestine....

And then he realised that the water in the biscuit tin was boiling and he knelt to put the tea and tinned milk into the two enamel mugs. As he knelt a drop of rain the size of a coin pitted his back. And another. And a third. He shuddered. Ten days they'd been on the road, making this reconnaissance for a projected Army exercise, and each day had been nothing but speed and distance hollow in the head, the mileometer

ticking up the daily two hundred, the dust of a hundred villages justifying their weariness with its ashes, and tomorrow also only speed and distance and the steadiness of the six cylinders. And he'd been dreaming of a Bombay whore whose red kiss he still had not washed from his arm, allowing her to enter where she would and push into oblivion the few things that were possible to him in the war and the peace. And now the rain made him shudder and he felt all the loneliness of India about him and he knew he had never been more alone. So he was content to watch the storm gather, operating against him from a heavy fulcrum in the east, lashing the bungalow and the trees, infuriating the night. The cooker spluttered and went out. He made no move to use the boiling water upon the tea. The moths flew in from the rain, and the grasshoppers and the bees. The frogs grunted and creached in the swirling mud and grass, the night was animate and violent. He waited without moving until the violence of the storm was spent. Then he looked at his watch. It was, as he thought. The driver had been gone an hour and twenty minutes. He knew he must go and look for him.

He loaded his revolver carefully and buckled on his holster over his bush shirt. He called for the old caretaker, but there was no reply. The bungalow was empty. He turned down the wick of the lamp and putting on his cap, stepped softly into the night. It was easy to get lost. It would be difficult to find anything tonight, unless it was plumb in the main road.

His feet felt under the streaming water for the stones of the road. The banyan tree he remembered, it was just beyond the pull-in. Its mass was over him now, he could feel it over his head. It was going to be difficult. The nearest cantonment was four hundred miles away; in any case the roads were too flooded now for him to retrace his way to Mhow. If he went on to Baroda, Ahmedabad—but the Mahi river would be in spate also. The lines down everywhere, too. They would have to go on, that he felt sure about. Before daybreak, too. It wasn't safe here. If only he could find the driver. He was irritated with the driver, irritated in a huge cloudy way, for bungling yet one more thing, for leaving him alone with so much on his hands, for insisting on looking for eggs. He'd known something would happen.

He felt the driver with his foot and knelt down over him in the swirling road and felt for his heart under his sodden shirt and cursed him in irritation and concern. Dead as a duckboard, knifed. The rain came on again and he tried to lift up the corpse the way he'd been taught, turning it first on to its back and standing firmly astride it. But the driver was obstinate and heavy and for a long time he refused to be lifted up.

He carried the deadweight back up the road, sweating and bitched by the awkward corpse, stumbling and trying in vain to straighten himself. What a bloody mess, he kept saying; I told him not to go and get eggs; did he have to have eggs for supper? It became a struggle between himself and the corpse, who was trying to slide down off his back and stay lying on the road. He had half a mind to let it have its way.

He got back eventually and backed himself against the veranda like a lorry, letting the body slide off his back; the head fell crack against the side wall and he said 'Sorry', and put a sack between the cheek and the ground. The kid was soaking wet and wet red mud in his hair; he wiped his face up a bit with cotton-waste and put a blanket over him while he packed the kit up and stowed it in the truck. He noticed the tea and sugar in the mugs and tried the temper of the water. It was too cold. He regretted it. He had the truck packed by the end of half an hour, his own bedding roll stretched on top of the baggage ready for the passenger. He hoped he'd be agreeable this time. He resisted a bit but he had stiffened a little and was more manageable. He backed him into the truck and then climbed in, pulling him on to the blanket by his armpits. Not until he'd put up the tailboard and got him all ready did he feel any ease. He sighed. They were away. He got into the driving seat to switch on the ignition. Then he realised there was no key. He felt a momentary panic. But surely the driver had it. He slipped out and, in the darkness and the drive of the rain, searched in the man's pockets. Paybook, matches, identity discs (must remember that, didn't even know his name), at last the keys.

He started the engine and let her warm up, slipped her into second and drove slowly out. The old caretaker never appeared, and Beale wondered whether he should say anything of his suspicions regarding the old man when he made his report. Unfortunately, there was no evidence. Still, they were away from there; he sighed with relief as the compulsion under which he had been acting relaxed. He had this extra sense, of which he was proud, of being able to feel the imminence of danger as others feel a change in the weather; it didn't help him in Libya, perhaps it hindered him there; but in a pub in Durban it had got him out in the nick of time; he'd edged for the door before a shot was fired. He knew tonight all right. The moment he saw that dull red lever of storm raised over his head, and the old caretaker had shrugged his shoulders after his warning had been laughed off. You had to bluff them; only sometimes bluff wasn't enough and then you had to get-away, face or no face. Now he tried to remember the route on the map; driving blind, the best thing was to go slow and pull in somewhere a

few miles on. Maybe the sun would rise sometime and he could dry out the map and work out the best route; no more native towns for him; he wanted to get to a cantonment if possible. Otherwise he'd look for the police lines at Dohad or Jabhua or wherever the next place was. But every time he thought of pulling in, a disinclination to stop the engine made him keep his drenched ammunition boot on the accelerator pedal. When he came to a road junction he followed his fancy; there is such a thing as letting the car do the guiding.

He drove for six hours before the night stirred at all. Then his red-veined eyes felt the slight lessening in the effectiveness of the headlights that presaged the day. When he could see the red berm of the road and the flooded paddy-fields lapping the bank, he at last pulled up under a tree and composed himself over the wheel, placing his cheek against the rim, avoiding the horn at the centre. He fell at once into a stiff rigid sleep.

A tribe of straggling gipsies passed him soon after dawn. They made no sound, leading their mules and camels along the soft berm on the other side of the road, mixing their own ways with no other's. The sun lay back of the blue rain-clouds, making the earth steam. The toads hopped out of the mud and rested under the stationary truck. Land-crabs came out of the earth and sat on the edge of their holes. Otherwise no one passed. The earth seemed content to let him have his sleep out. He woke about noon, touched by the sun as it passed.

He felt guilty. Guilty of neglect of duty, having slept at his post? Then he got a grip on himself and rationalized the dreadful guilt away. What could he have done about it? The driver had been murdered. What did they expect him to do? Stay there and give them a second treat? Stay there and investigate? Or get on and report it. Why hadn't he reported it earlier? How could he? The lines were down, the roads flooded behind him, he was trying his best; he couldn't help sleeping for a couple of hours. Yet the guilt complex persisted. It was a bad dream and he had some evil in him, a soft lump of evil in his brain. But why? If he'd told the man to go for eggs it would be different. He was bound to be all right as long as he had his facts right. Was there an accident report to be filled in immediately, in duplicate, Army Form B-something-or-other? He took out his notebook, but the paper was too wet to take his hard pencil. 2300 hrs. on 23 August 1942 deceased stated his desire to get some eggs. I warned him that disturbances of a political character had occurred in the area. . . . He shook himself, bleary and sore-throated, in his musty overalls, and thought a shave and some food would put him right. He went round to the back of the truck. The body had slipped with the jolting of the road. He climbed

in and looked at the ashen face. The eyes were closed, the face had sunk into an expressionless inanition, it made him feel indifferent to the whole thing. Poor sod. Where was his hate now? Was he grieving that the woman, Mona was it, would get a pension out of him now? Did he still hate her? He seemed to have let the whole matter drop. Death was something without hate in it. But he didn't want to do anything himself except shave and eat and get the whole thing buttoned up. He tore himself away from the closed soiled face and ferreted about for his shaving kit. He found it at last, and after shaving in the muddy rain-water he ate a few hard biscuits and stuffed a few more into his pocket. Then he lashed the canvas down over the tail-board and got back to the wheel. The truck was slow to start. The bonnet had been leaking and the plugs were wet in the cylinder heads. She wouldn't spark for a minute or two. Anxiety swept over him. He cursed the truck viciously. Then she sparked on a couple of cylinders, stuttered for a minute as the others dried out, and settled down steadily. He ran her away carefully and again relaxed. He was dead scared of being stranded with the body. There wasn't even a shovel on the truck.

After driving for an hour he realised he didn't know where he was. He was in the centre of a vast plain of paddy-fields, lined by raised bunds and hedged with cactus along the road. White herons and tall fantastic cranes stood by the pools in the hollows. He pulled up to try and work out his position. But his map was nowhere to be found. He must have left it at the dak bungalow in his haste. He looked at his watch; it had stopped. Something caved in inside him, a sensation of panic, of an enemy against whose machinations he had failed to take the most elementary precautions. He was lost.

He moved on again at once. There was distance. The mileometer still measured something? By sunset he would do so many miles. How much of the day was left? Without the sun how could he tell? He was panicky at not knowing these things; he scarcely knew more than the man in the back of the truck. So he drove on and on, passing nobody but a tribe of gipsies with their mules and camels, and dark peasants driving their bullocks knee-deep in the alluvial mud before their simple wooden ploughs. He drove as fast as the truck would allow; in some places it was flooded and narrow, descending to narrow causeways swept by brown streams which he only just managed to cross. He drove till the land was green with evening, and in the crepuscular uncertainty he halted and decided to kip down for the night. He would need petrol; it was kept in tins in the back of the truck; it meant pulling the body out or making him sit away in a corner. He didn't want to disturb the kid. He'd been jolted all day; and now this indignity. He did all he had to do

with a humility that was alien to him. Respect he knew; but this was more than respect; obedience and necessity he knew, but this was more than either of these. It was somehow an admission of the integrity of the man, a new interest in what he was and what he had left behind. He got some soap and a towel, after filling his tanks, and when he had washed himself he propped the driver up against the tailboard and sponged him clean and put P.T. shoes on his feet instead of the boots that had so swollen his feet. When he had laid him out on the blankets and covered him with a sheet, he rested from his exertions, and as he recovered his breath he glanced covertly at him, satisfied that he had done something for him. What would the woman have done, Monica? Would she have flirted with him? Most women did, and he didn't discourage them. But this woman, my God, he'd bloody well beat her up. It was her doing, this miserable end, this mess-up. He hadn't gone down the road to get eggs; he'd gone to get away from her. It must have been a habit of his, at nights, to compose himself. She'd bitched it all. He could just see her. And she still didn't know a thing about him, not the first thing. Yes, he hated her all right, the voluptuous bitch.

He slept at the wheel again, falling asleep with a biscuit still half chewed in his mouth. He had erotic dreams, this woman Monica drawing him a pint, and her mouth and her breasts and the shallow taunting eyes; and the lights in her attic bedroom with the door ajar, and the wooden stairs creaking. And the dawn then laid its grey fingers upon him and he woke with the same feeling of guilt and shame, a grovelling debased mood, that had seized him the first morning. He got up stretching himself, heady with vertigo and phlegm, and washed himself in the paddy flood. He went round to the back of the truck to get some biscuits. He got them quietly, the boy was still sleeping, and he said to himself that he would get him through today, honest he would. He had to.

The sun came out and the sky showed a young summer blue. The trees wakened and shook soft showers of rain off their leaves. Hills showed blue as lavender and when he came to the cross-roads he steered north-west by the sun, reckoning to make the coast road somewhere near Baroda. There would be a cantonment not far from there, and a Service dump for coffins, and someone to whom he could make a report. It would be an immense relief. His spirits rose. Driving was tricky; the worn treads of the tyres tended to skid, the road wound up and down the ghats, through tall loose scrub; but he did not miss seeing the shy jungle wanderers moving through the bush with their bows, tall lithe men like fauns with black hair over their eyes that were like grapes. They would stand a moment under a tree, and glide away back

into the bush. There were villages now, and women of light olive skin beating their saris on the stones, rhythmically, and their breasts uncovered.

And then, just when he felt he was out of the lost zones, in the late afternoon, he came down a long sandy track through cactus to a deep and wide river at which the road ended. A gipsy tribe was fording it and he watched them to gauge the depth of the river. The little mules, demure as mice, kicked up against the current, nostrils too near the water to neigh; the camels followed the halter, stately as bishops, picking their calm way. The babies sat on their parents' heads, the women unwound their saris and put them in a bundle on their crowns, the water touched their breasts. And Beale pushed his truck into bottom gear and nosed her cautiously into the stream. Midway across the brown tide swept up to his sparking plugs and the engine stopped. He knew at once that he was done for. The river came up in waves over the sideboards and his whole concern was that the boy inside would be getting wet. A gipsy waded past impersonally, leading two bright-eyed grey mules. Beale hailed him. He nodded and went on. Beale called out 'Help!' the gipsies gathered on the far bank and discussed it. He waved and eventually three of them came wading out to him. He knew he must abandon the truck till a recovery section could be sent out to salvage it, but he must take his companion with him, naturally. When the gipsies reached him he pointed to the back of the truck, unlaced the tarpaulin and showed them the corpse. They nodded their heads gravely. Their faces were serious and hard. He contrived to show them what he wanted and when he climbed in they helped him intelligently to hoist the body out. They contrived to get it on to their heads, ducking down under the tailboard till their faces were submerged in the scum of the flood.

They carried him ashore that way, Beale following with his revolver and webbing. They held a conclave on the sand while the women wrung out their saris and the children crowded about the body. Beale stood in the centre of these lean outlandish men, not understanding a word. They talked excitedly, abruptly, looking at him and at the corpse. He fished his wallet out of his pocket and showed them a five-rupee note. He pointed to the track and to the mules. They nodded and came to some domestic agreement. One of them led a little mule down to the stream and they strapped a board across its bony moulted back, covering the board with sacking. Four of them lifted the body up and lashed it along the spar. Then they smiled at Beale, obviously asking for his approval of their skill. He nodded back and said 'That's fine'. The gipsies laid their panniers on the mules, the women wound their

saris about their swarthy bodies, called their children, formed behind their men. The muleteer grinned and nodded his head to Beale. The caravanserai went forward across the sands. Beale turned back once to look at the truck, but he was too bloody tired and fed up to mind. It would stay there; it was settled in; if the floods rose it would disappear; if they fell so much the better. He couldn't help making a balls of it all. He had the body, that was one proof; they could find the truck if they came to look for it, that was the second proof. If they wanted an accident report they could wait. If they thought he was puddled they could sack him when they liked. What was it all about, anyway?

Stumbling up the track in the half-light among the ragged garish gipsies he gradually lost the stiff self-consciousness with which he had first approached them. He was thinking of a page near the beginning of a history book he had studied in the Sixth at school in 1939. About the barbarian migrations in pre-history; the Celts and Iberians, Goths and Vandals and Huns. Once Life had been nothing worth recording beyond the movements of people like these, camels and asses piled with the poor property of their days, panniers, rags, rope, gramm and dahl, lambs and kids too new to walk, barefooted, long-haired people rank with sweat, animals shivering with ticks, old women striving to keep up with the rest of the family. He kept away from the labouring old women, preferring the tall girls who walked under the primitive smooth heads of the camels. He kept his eye on the corpse, but he seemed comfortable enough. Except he was beginning to corrupt. There was a faint whiff of badness about him. . . . What did the gipsies do? They would burn him, perhaps, if the journey took too long. How many days to Baroda? The muleteer nodded his head and grinned.

Well, as long as he had the man's identity discs and paybook, he would be covered. He must have those. . . . He slipped the identity discs over the wet blue head and matted hair and put them in his overall pocket. He would be alright now, even if they burned him. . . . It would be a bigger fire than the one they had sat by and fed with twigs and talked about women together that night, how many nights ago?

He wished, though, that he knew where they were going. They only smiled and nodded when he asked. Maybe they weren't going anywhere much, except perhaps to some pasture, to some well.

## *The Apoplectic Revolution*

JOHN ATKINS

Considering the exalted personages it swept away it started in a very humble manner. The first victim was B.B.C. announcer Guy Lambden.

Guy was noted, even among his colleagues, for his apparently unshakable coolness and suavity. Really, there was very little else he could be noted for. True, his manners were charming, he was at his best with women, and his shoes always had a delightful polish. But the same could have been said of all the other announcers.

He was giving the news summary on a Thursday evening. Nine o'clock. Nothing exciting, but at least things were satisfactory. All the war theatres were holding their audiences' attentions and two more thirteenth century Gothic churches had been destroyed. Guy had just finished the foreign news when a slip of paper was handed him. On it was written, 'Stand by for late communiqué.'

Guy turned to the microphone again and said, 'Here is a special communiqué, just come in'. He paused, while a sheaf of papers was passed to him. Then he raised his head and began, mastering his new script with an ease that was the envy of all the other announcers. When faced with something they hadn't had a chance to rehearse most of them made at least a couple of blunders, reading 'constipation' for 'concentration', for example, or even lapsing for a phrase into their native dialects. (This, of course, was fatal and invariably resulted in dismissal.)

It was magnificent. The long awaited offensive had begun. The Fifty-Fourth Army had attacked at all points simultaneously. To fool the enemy they had moved at dusk instead of dawn. Paralini, Bombalini and Maratini had already been taken, and at the time of dispatch Fossilini was being invested. The bewildered enemy didn't know what had hit them.

But, amazing as was the news, there was something else that was even more astonishing. Guy Lambden, for the first time in history, was allowing himself to be carried away by the message. Starting, as usual, with a dispassionate, unhurried rendering of his script, he gradually developed speed and raised his voice. Ecstatic listeners cast puzzled glances at each other, and then began to enter into the spirit of the thing. 'Victory,' they shouted, and started to pound the arms of their chairs. Meanwhile, Guy's voice was like a hurricane sweeping from a

million loudspeakers and filling a million rooms with tones of frenzied passion. Passion, from Guy Lambden, the Ice-Cool Announcer! (That's how he had been described once in the City Man's Diary.) He seemed to have surrendered himself wholly to sound and fury; only the nimblest ears could catch the meaning of the words, though not one was slurred or clipped. As for the others, the slow of hearing and the partially deaf, they felt they were being engulfed and gloried in every moment of it.

'The baffled enemy', roared Guy, 'knew not where to look for salvation. They staggered from ridge to ridge, taking on their shoulders the full load of an hundred angry Sky Angels. And these, having dropped their bombs with unerring precision, returned for more. Never has the enemy faced such fury before. The cause of the Allies marches triumphantly from gully to gully, spanning the death-strewn wastes, avenging Gug-gug, Tug-tug and Toma-toma.'

At this point the more acute listeners believed that Guy interpolated his own version of events, although the authorities kept silent on this point. At least, he raised his voice to a shriek and exclaimed, 'The enemy is battered, is being battered and will continue to be battered until—'

Until! But no-one will ever know where Guy Lambden's explosive oratory was due to end. For at that moment there was a snap, like a crank-shaft breaking, followed by a clicking noise at first rapid but then dying away to isolated ticks until there was silence. A complete, full silence, as after a clockwork toy has run down.

Next morning it was announced that Guy Lambden had collapsed and died of an apoplectic fit.

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That was how it started. The next victim was none other than the Prime Minister.

One day an inquisitive journalist, rambling through *Who's Who*, had stumbled across the name of Sir Digby Dykes and had discovered, to his astonishment, that he held the post of Chancellor of the Duchy of West Wimbledon. After seeing several important people he arranged for a question to be put in the House, in order to elicit answers to the following: What were the duties of the Chancellor and what was his salary? Since it was well known that the old man was a personal friend of the Premier there would be a good chance of baiting the Government.

The attack was naturally left to the younger group in the House, for the baronet in question was over a hundred and could vividly remember the Duke of Wellington's funeral. The question was put by one of

the liveliest members, a man with a cruel wit and impish zest, himself under seventy.

The Premier was furious. His cheeks grew scarlet and thin blue lines seemed to emerge from his flesh and worm all over his cheeks. The House sighed in anticipation, and many of them kept awake.

'This petty attack,' began the P.M., 'this contemptible, invidious, underhand, cruel attack on one whose loyalty and devotion have for decades of public service remained unquestioned—' (here the Premier fumbled with a handkerchief and the Minister of Pensions glared angrily at the impudent member who had started it)—'this attack, I say—', but the P.M. had got lost in a verbal wilderness of his own making and had to start again.

He did so with a vigour that roused even the most somnolent members. 'I spurn the ugly spirit that prompted this question. I scorn the members who are responsible for it. Never in the whole of my political experience have my friends or I been witnesses of so-so—' Then, while the Premier was still searching for a sufficiently vitriolic term, the startled members heard a snap and a ticking (so similar to the noises many of them had heard on the radio the previous night) and saw their leader stiffen. His head fell back, then his body began to crumple and he collapsed. Six Ministers dashed to his side, and a bald little man wriggled through and kissed his hand.

It was announced that the Premier had died of an apoplectic fit largely brought on by a shameful attack on his lifelong friend.

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Two such unusual events following so closely one upon the other struck people as strange, but no-one yet connected them. It was only when important orators and leaders of the nation's councils were dying of fits in large numbers that the suspicion of contagion arose. By the end of the week everyone was convinced, though as yet Science hadn't recovered sufficient equilibrium to put the conviction on a basis of fact and experimental research, that a new and horrible plague had taken hold of the population and no-one knew whether the next victim might not be himself or his neighbour.

A bishop was cut down while exclaiming to his congregation, 'We must bomb their cities until the walls are splashed with blood of the heathen'. Then followed a Trade Union leader, speaking at a local conference: 'Make 'em pay! Our chief war aim must be to make income tax 19/6 in the mark for every man jack of 'em.' Next a well-known London magistrate, while delivering a homily to a frightened refugee: 'We know your sort. It's you that's been putting all our English girls in the family way.' A popular novelist, loved in time of peace for his

startling crime novels, was shouting, 'Spray them with mustard gas and broken glass' when the plague took him.

A frightened nation began to count its dead. Most of them were impressed by the selectivity of the disease. Although the victims were by no means all official propagandists it was noteworthy that they were all people who had something to say about the brutal enemy and his disgusting methods of warfare, so that the bewildered public, even that section of it that did not listen to speeches and were therefore ill-educated in public affairs, began to formulate suspicions.

The event that caused the greatest shock since the death of the Prime Minister was the sudden demise of Stephen Hand, brilliant young editor of one of the great national dailies. He was a popular figure, never at a loss for an explanation or a well-aimed term of abuse, and was regarded as one of the nation's firmest bulwarks in time of stress. He used to spend many hours in the Half Moon, drinking brandy with one hand and writing his leaders with the other. He would always be surrounded by a chorus of journalists, waiting impatiently for the Master to finish, when he would read to them the daily polemic. Filled with quotations and parallels from *Revelations*, Marat, Hazlitt, and Carlyle, it was the high spot of their day. And so, when in the midst of an annihilating diatribe against the person and policies of the Lord Chancellor, something snapped inside Stephen and he began to unwind and droop, the expressions of beatific worship on his admirers' faces changed to horror, and some of them were compelled to turn away.

A tremor ran from Ludgate Circus, down Fleet Street and the Strand, round the corner and up Whitehall to Westminster.

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A week after the death of poor Stephen Hand the capital (or at least, that part of it which really matters) was barely recognisable. Before it had been so hard-hitting, so full of vigour and enthusiasm in any cause that was recommended by righteousness; now it was a place of pale ghosts, of timid spirits, men and women who were afraid to unburden their souls in the customary way. A complete revolution in the technique of verbal expression had to be undertaken in barely more time than it takes to write a pamphlet; but worse, the situation required a revolution in feeling, in the very processes of the mind. People who had been accustomed to saying what they thought in as forthright a manner as they could manage now found themselves continually searching for words that possessed no edge or that could be interpreted in a number of ways; the population was employed in the construction of a scheme of laborious understatement. A new set of clichés displaced

the old ones; for instance, retired colonels in clubs were no longer heard to say, 'Damned disgraceful, sir!' but murmured instead, 'Now really, don't you think that that was perhaps a little uncalled-for?' followed by a hasty, 'Not that I have any right or even any desire to criticise . . .'

About this time a Cabinet meeting of an unusual character and an unusual importance was held. All the Ministers sat erectly round the table and frequently offered each other cigarettes. All the old feuds (and there had been many) seemed to have been obliterated; and if the view is held that old feuds cannot be obliterated in the course of a few days, then they were remarkably well concealed.

The new Prime Minister came quickly to the point. He stated in a passionless monologue, which none of the others dared interrupt, that the nation's morale was at its lowest ebb since the beginning of the war. Civil servants were taking extended leaves of absence (not daring to expose themselves to their colleagues for more than a few hours a week), politicians were retiring from their constituencies, pressmen were reduced to nature notes. Naturally the country at large, deserted by its leaders, was baffled. No longer able to turn to the usual sources for guidance and enlightenment in their thought and discussion about public affairs, they were quickly approaching a state of despair.

But the nation, particularly its leaders, must not despair. In this hour of trial they must remember that they were the stewards of a race and they would have to answer before God and the people for their stewardship. Having said this, he had pleasure in laying before them a circumstance that could not but fill their hearts with hope and exalt them. Sir Lindsay Loudbottom, the King's Physician, had been researching on the plague and its causes, its symptoms and its channels of contagion, and he believed—nay, he was certain—that he had an answer. He therefore suggested, but he would take no decision until his colleagues were in complete agreement with him, that Sir Lindsay should be allowed to make a nation-wide broadcast on Sunday evening at 9 o'clock.

The other ministers supported him with signs of relief. One even retailed a joke told him by the Portuguese Ambassador on the previous evening and daringly gave a little titter. None of the others felt sufficiently secure to join in, but the incident was symptomatic of the lightened atmosphere caused by the Premier's news. And there was one touching little scene which is worth recalling. The Ministers of War and Labour had not spoken to each other for three years, since the occasion when they had quarrelled over the body of a miner. But now, as they filed out, the Minister of War actually laid a hand on the

Minister of Labour's shoulder and said, 'I think we understand each other better now, Tristram?' With tears in his eyes the Minister of Labour replied, 'Yes, Cyril, I think we do.'

\* \* \*

Sir Lindsay was on the air. He spoke in grave tones, and at first his voice was so low, so reverend, one might say, that most sets had to be turned up. He recounted, factually and without even a hint of the persiflage he usually loved to employ in his public orations, the course of the plague. He gave figures: the Prime Minister, two bishops, four leader writers, seventeen politicians, five popular broadcasters, twenty-five pamphleteers and one patriotic poet. He stated that he had not the time to classify all the other victims, less exalted but all lamented, but together—journalists, clergymen, business men, magistrates, lawyers, merchants, industrialists, civil servants—the total amounted to no less than (he paused) one thousand two hundred and seventeen souls. The nation mourned its servants; the loss was irreparable.

He proceeded to give a physiological account of the disease, which this writer is not qualified to discuss. Suffice it to say that the high tension caused by certain modes of speaking or even by certain modes of thought resulted in a constriction of the diaphragm, which in turn caused pressure on the walls of the heart, with further results only too familiar. Therefore the first consideration was to avoid such modes of speech and thought: these he classified as intemperate, heated, diatribic, polemical, envenomed, passionate, impassioned, threatening, fiery. In short, he would advise all mental and bodily processes, in so far as this was possible, to be carried on in a strictly rational and dispassionate manner.

'Now,' he went on, 'I come to the subject that will be puzzling most of you: the ulterior, as opposed to immediate, causes of this disease and its rampaging violence. Apoplexy, to use the term by which it was formerly called, has been known to medical science for many centuries. Why, then, is it only now that what was formerly an individual tragedy has become a contagious disease? My friends, in these days we do not need to look far afield, alas, for the author of our discontents. The same enemy that bombs our fair cities, murders our citizens (including babies) in cold blood, visits the most devilish torments upon our prisoners, this same enemy has now perfected a new weapon which outrages all others in its unbelievable barbarity. We have heard rumours of bacteriological warfare; but that, in comparison with this, would have been the amateur device of a novice in warfare; it would have been an honourable weapon. It would have struck all, high and low, rich and poor, alike. But to-day the enemy is scattering germs of

such peculiar nature that it can only possibly affect those of us who have occasion to venture into the very realms of speculative politics and castalian oratory. The high-powered brain, the daring formulator of hypotheses, the acutely sensitive intellect, is susceptible: is struck down. But the mute, inarticulate worker at his bench, housewife at her sink, soldier at his gun, is unaffected; escapes the scythe. My friends, has ever mind of man concocted such a horrifying instrument? But am I justified in using the word "man"? Is this gang of bloodthirsty scoundrels, besmirched with the excrement of their own foul conjurings . . .

At this point Sir Lindsay dropped dead.

\* \* \*

There is little more to be said.

The Revolution was now complete. Hardly an official of any importance remained at his post. As for the unofficial officials, they had retired in a body to places like Bude and the Isle of Man, feeling that the purer air of these regions would safeguard them against their own lapses.

Those who stayed in London crowded the hotels, a pitiable mass of unemployed. Many of them did not dare to open their mouths except to ask for a packet of cigarettes or a whisky and soda. Others tried to shut their minds to any but domestic subjects, and in these cases 'domestic' referred to the home and not the nation. One man, who had written three books on Hate, now sought expiation in a new Life of Christ, spending many hours in the British Museum reading the Gospels. Even the clergy returned to the scriptures for their texts, having for the last three years found them in an edition of the Prime Minister's collected speeches, an edition bound especially for them in morocco.

Many men, particularly officials, are stubborn creatures. Most of them found it impossible to change the habits of a lifetime in the course of a few weeks. Being mentally flexible they found little difficulty in toning down their thoughts and conversation; some even made their position quite sure by a complete reversal of outlook. (There was no danger in this, for no-one would risk death by denouncing them.) What they could not change or abdicate from was their lust for power, their determination to be in at the kill, whether political, financial or social. What disconcerted them at first was the fact that no-one had taken over their old positions. Although it was undoubtedly risky it seemed fantastic that no-one considered the key positions worth annexing. The only conclusion was that the mass, whom they had always known to be dull, was not only dull but doltish to the degree of idiocy. It would have been supposed, for instance, that the closure of the press

would have resulted in an outcry for its re-issue. But there was not even a murmur. People seemed to go about their jobs, on the whole, in an untroubled way; they went to the libraries more, that was the only difference. Of course, there were a few business men on the nine o'clock trains who felt restless, but in some remarkable way they seemed to be losing their influence.

Then there was the war. According to the rules of logic, all the fronts should have collapsed. But to the contrary, successes were reported from every field of action. How did it happen? How can an army fight when it has lost the inspiration given it by Government spokesmen and radio propagandists? It was all very puzzling. And it extended throughout the land. Factories without Boards of Directors, ships without shipping companies, manufacturers without advertising agencies, all seemed to be carrying on as though the nation were still hale and hearty and not decapitated and bleeding.

So the exiles began to regain courage. In the first place, their innate desire for office and emoluments urged them to recover their lost positions, especially since no-one else had stepped in and taken them. And in the second place, because of all these unbelievable vacancies, they possessed what their kind must always have the conviction that what they did was in the public good. The nation was leaderless and they, although they realised it was like walking into a morgue from which there was no escape, answered the call. 'Call', of course, was a metaphorical term for something they felt must be there.

Like a host of revenants they poured out of the retreats and returned to haunt their former dwelling places. They streamed into the ministries, invaded the Government departments, put on their eye-shields, and set up their presses, and once again the machine, after many grunts from un-oiled parts, got to work. It was an uncanny situation, however, for no-one seemed to take any notice of them. They started issuing pamphlets, broadcasting appeals and printing news items in subjects ranging from 'The War in the North-East' to 'The War in the South-East'. But somehow no-one was very interested. Yet at the same time no-one made any attempt to disturb them or interfere with their industry.

And that's how the matter remains. The art of Government is still practised, official propaganda is still distributed on a very wide scale (although a very restrained propaganda it is), but it is very doubtful if more than one per cent. of the population bothers its head about it. I am told that bodies like Mass-Observation have comprehensive files of all this material, and no doubt it will come in useful for some future historian. As for the officials themselves, being unmolested they are in

a way happy, but they have none of their old confidence. In the old days they were the salt of the earth, ordinary people were only tolerated; now the situation is completely transposed so that the more intelligent officials realise somewhat vaguely that they are a kind of human Zoo (for occasionally people bring their children to watch them leaving their offices and throw them old editions of newspapers which they have discovered in bottom drawers), while the public looks upon them good-naturedly as inhabitants of a reserve rather like the Red Indians in North America.

## *Kittens*

GWYN JONES

He wasn't waiting at the corner. He halted at the edge of the pavement peering anxiously to and fro, and then saw her white glove beckon from shadow. He crossed over, his relief still tinged with uneasiness, touched the brim of his hat. 'Hullo,' he said, 'hullo, Glenys.' She was shorter than he, just the loving height, between slender and thin. Her mouth and eyes blotched her face viola-fashion, the smooth contours of her cheeks fell through a shallow curve to a slightly blunted chin, the nose was pretty, straight-bridged, and in harmony with the chin, a little squared at the nostrils. The nicest face in the world, for someone else's sweetheart. Her costume was dark, black it looked to him, she had a silver-fox stole loosely on her shoulders, her blouse like her gloves was white—he could see it gleaming, and the big buttons with the flower pattern on them—his eyes kept returning to them. That she was older than he pleased and flattered him, as he was pleased and flattered by her make-up, her clothes, her style, by all that made her different from the girls and women of the village. She belonged to a setting of advertisements, shop windows, motor cars, men dressed like bank managers, and this flattered him most of all. And yet, he thought, I'm here with her. Of all the men about here I'm the one. The one she chose.

'Been waiting, Morri?' Her voice too was different; a voice with class. His tongue felt fat and loose when he began to talk.

No, no, he said. Not he. Only a minute, anyway. 'Had to call in the Institute,' he told her, watching her face. 'See the team for Saturday, you know.'

'You'll be playing?'

'Got to.' It wasn't a pressing question, but it gave him something to say as he took her arm. 'Shove um right off the field without me. Strength in the back row to lock um, see.'

'Oh, I know. And you are terribly strong, Morri, aren't you?'

'Oh I donno. Average, about.'

She looked up into his face as they passed the hanging light where the mountain road starts its climb. He was a haulier from the Red Vein, hardly more than twenty, well-clamped and supple. Between the temples his face was white and broad, but it narrowed downwards like an axehead; his hair was black and oiled; she saw his jaw glistening from too close a shave. His eyelashes were longer and softer than her own, his eyes like black fur. She smiled, approving him.

As he smiled back she squeezed his arm into the soft of her side. 'More than average, Morri. Why, just feel this arm!'

'Ah,' he said, and halted. He grinned, rather sheepishly. 'Feel that, Glenys.' He guided her hand to his biceps, flexing slowly and powerfully, till her fingers were clipped between his fore and upper arm. 'Try and get away, uh?'

But with admiration and a squeal she failed. He dilated with mastery and pride and moved his shoulders happily inside his coat. 'What a strong arm!' she praised, and moved gently and as it were by accident, so that the arm was behind her back and then crooked about her waist. As they walked on, up the sunken road, her head was against his shoulder, and his nostrils snuffed the dry exciting smell of her hair and the fox stole. Soon they were past the quarry, and without a word said left the road and leaned for a while on the fence that led to Bryn-Eithin. Below them, swung in an arc, they could see the lights of three villages, and linking these the road and railway spattered with red and yellow. Down in the valley bottom were the smudged lamps of the Red Vein collieries, those in the sidings winking and blinking as the trucks were shunted into long clanking lines. All this din of wheels and brakes and line-points came to them thin and silvered across a hillside of gorse and fern, as much a part of the place as the yelp of a dog from Bryn-Eithin or an owl hooting from the Penllwyn wood. Over against them, in the next valley, the Cwrt Mawr steelworks troubled the dark, and suddenly they saw a vast red surging behind the clouds as fire died upwards from the jaws of the ovens. As the darkness thickened again, 'Look,' she said, and pointed to the way they had come, the unlit tunnel of the sunken road.

'What, Glenys?'

'It's horrid!' She turned quickly to face the trembling sky over Cwrt

Mawr. 'All that dark—and the quiet—and the things there may be in it—'

But to him the dark was friendly. 'You wouldn't do underground, Glenys.'

'No,' she said grimly. 'I wouldn't.' She pressed against him.

He fell silent, for a moment oppressed by things he couldn't understand. This down she had on the valley, which seemed so good to him— But there, she was different—that was the fine thing about her. He drew her to him, holding her clumsily, his hands moving irresolutely over her back as though afraid of crushing her.

'I'm glad I met you, Morri. I couldn't have stuck it out here after Cardiff if I hadn't.' She pulled at his lapel. 'It's the one thing I'm sorry about, going—'

'To-night, Glenys?'

'I've got to. I must catch the twelve-ten down. You know how it is.'

He broke in. 'I've brought it, Glenys.'

'I'm terribly ashamed, Morri, taking it. It's awful for a girl to have to do. And if dad knew—'

'He don't have to. Nobody don't.'

'You're a lovely boy, Morri.'

'That's all right, Glenys. You'd better——' He released her, fumbled in his pocket for his wallet. There was a thin sheaf of notes in it, held by elastic, which he handed over without counting.

'I'll pay it back, every penny. And the other.'

'That's all right,' he said again, dry-mouthed, watching her put it safe in her handbag. 'Glad I had it, Glenys.'

'As soon as I saw you I knew you were the real man around here. There was something as soon as I set eyes on you. I knew.'

'No,' he muttered, 'I'm not much really. Haulier, you know. Not a bad job, mind——'

She began to tell him how fine he was, how generous, and again how strong. Her stole, heavy with scent, brushed his underjaw, and with it he could smell the untamed animal odour of the fur itself. 'I've got to go, Morri—you can see that—with dad the way he is. He doesn't understand me. He never has. No-one ever did about here. I know how they talk. They think it wicked for a girl to look nice and want something better than the Gelli.' She checked on her mistake, but he had noticed nothing. 'He'd kill me if he knew I'd taken money from a man—from you, Morri. You won't tell, will you?'

'No,' he said, 'no.'

'And you'll come down and see me?'

'Regular, Glenys—often as I can.'

'Any time you want to, Morri. If you don't forget me. You may, Morri. These other girls about here—' her voice changed, began to throb through him, '—you must be awful with them, I'm sure, a boy like you. Aren't you?'

He was torn between truth and vanity. 'It's you, Glenys,' he blurted, 'it's you are the one.' And he spoke truth. Her looks, her clothes, her maturity struck at something in him deeper than vanity. She was music to him, and singing, and poetry.

She took his face in her hands and kissed him. 'Nice Morri!' But her mind was still full of the money he had given her. 'I'll be on my feet in a couple of months, easy. I'll have a nice little flat, I expect. Nothing'll ever be too good for you with me, Morri.' Her thin fingers stroked his hair. 'You're a real man, Morri—the only one around here. You're different—anyone can see that.'

'Glenys,' he said, 'Glenys!'

His voice, his face, his hands were to her pages read and known. Centred in her brain was the icy spiral of calculation, but this did not stop her growing excited, confused, sentimental.

'Glenys!' he cried hoarsely.

'No, dear,' she whispered, trying to break from him. 'Please, Morri!' Then her nails tore his wrist with the violence of fire. 'Morri, you mustn't!'

'Why not, Glenys? Damn it all——'

'Because you lent me the money? Let me go, will you?' She struggled from him, her handbag falling to the ground. 'I didn't think you'd do a thing like that. If I've been nice to you it wasn't because of the money.' He bent, humiliated and tormented, but she was before him, straightening again, making show to unclip her bag. 'You'd better take it back, if that's the way you feel about me.'

'No,' he said ashamedly, 'I wouldn't take it. Glenys—don't be angry. I didn't mean anything, honest I didn't.' He drew her to him again, patted her shoulder, abasing himself, yet with it all feeling cheated and desperate. 'Don't be angry, there's a girl. I didn't mean anything, honest now.' She was so weak compared with him, her bones like pipestems under the silky flesh, that his desire suddenly melted into compassion. 'So small,' he said, 'so little, mun. I donna my own strength. I'd do anything for you, Glenys, honest I would.'

'And I'd do anything for you, Morri, so long as you didn't think it was because of the money. You're the dearest boy I ever met. Hold me again, Morri. Hold me closer! And kiss me, to show——' But he was glum, baffled, half-hearted, his arms were slack and heavy. She pressed her lips to his, at first acting a part, but soon taking fire from his brute

strength. 'If it wasn't that you thought it because of the money,' she prompted. 'Please say it, Morri.'

The thought troubled him. Had it been the money?

'Please say it, Morri.'

'It wasn't the money,' he said, and hid his face in her hair.

'Because I'd be common then, wouldn't I? If you're a nice girl, it's very hard—but I should have known with you, Morri.' Honour satisfied, her handbag safe, she encouraged his caresses; above them the sky trembled and glowed, and he saw the white of her skin flush with rose. Something in her expression shocked him even in the flood-tide of passion, but she spoke. 'Look, Morri, you see—I'll do anything to make you happy!'

It was a little after eleven when he reached home. His brother was not yet off the afternoon shift. His aunt, who looked after the two of them, had set his supper alongside his brother's under a clean teacloth, and was still darning by the fire. She was a dry-tongued, cold-faced collier's widow. He was slightly afraid of her. But to-night he greeted her off-hand, for after all her day was over, then wetted the tea from the kettle on the hob, and sat to table. Straightaway the black-and-white kitten by his aunt's side came over to claw at his leg, and he lifted her up. 'Goh,' he breathed, 'like little toy bones!' He could feel them no thicker than pipestems under the silky fur. At the thought his eyes glowed, and his aunt, watching, saw his lips move.

'Been drinking?' she asked sharply.

'No.'

She twitched at her wool. 'Been mashin' then?' The edging of contempt offended him, but he wasn't braced for anger. Instead, his eyes lit up again under their long black lashes. 'And who's the lucky lady?' she asked. His silence irritated her. 'Or is it a secret? P'raps I could make a guess.' Ostentatiously he yawned, but she struck off a name on her little finger. 'It wouldn't be Gwen Vaughan now, would it?'

'Her?' He smoothed his thighs, good-humouredly. 'Chair-legs!'

'No, no, it wouldn't be Gwen—and of course she's sweet on that Thomas boy. Now would it be Mildred Lewis, I wonder?'

He yawned again. 'She's waiting for the whistle, I don't doubt.'

'Ay, but is it your whistle, Morri?' She was a cunning woman who made her approaches by indirection. She now struck down a third finger. 'Or it might be Mrs. Colonel James's daughter from the Mansion who's waiting for the whistle. P'raps you went for a ride to-night in the Colonel's Rolls Royce, was it, Morri?'

'Ah, cut it out!'

'No, somehow I don't think it was Miss Colonel James. Then

there's—' her voice cut like glass, '—it wouldn't be that fly piece of Hugh Bowen's, I suppose?'

'No harm in s'posin'.'

'You fool, Morri!'

'Think so?' Again his eyes glowed, his hands opened and clenched and then lay open.

'What sort of good is she to you—a piece like that? All high heels and a bit of fur round her neck—and scent! Her old man out of work these ten years and more—I'd like to know where she gets things from.'

'Then why the hell don't you ask her?' he flashed.

'I don't have to.' He looked up, startled. 'There've been trade over that counter since Eve's day. And there's no need for language.'

For a moment he looked like flying into a rage. Instead: 'What's a hell or two among friends?' he said roughly, and flung his collar and tie to the sideboard behind him. He felt clawings at his trouser leg, and was relieved to be able to swing the kitten up to his shoulder. *Mmm-mm-mmrr-mmrr-mmrr,* she went, and bit gingerly at his ear. Her fragility moved him to an ecstasy of strength and protection. As her fur brushed his underjaw and he could smell the queer animal smell, he breathed hard; his eyes smouldered. They know, he thought, they know the ones they like; they know the real men.

'Old enough to be your mother,' said his aunt.

He jumped up, shouting. 'For Christ's sake will you keep your tongue off her!' She stood up to brazen it out, but for the first time in her life was afraid of him. 'You've got your old man's temper,' she said slowly; 'and look what that done for him. I thought you had more sense.' She sat down again, began to put away her darning. His hands unclenched, his jaws slackened. 'All right,' he said unsteadily. 'All right then. Only shut your mouth.'

His aunt was nodding her disgust when they heard the scrape of boots on the bailey and the double stroke of the latch. His brother Mog, came in, black-faced, red-lipped, and with whitey rings under his eyes. He was a brisk-moving man, and just now his coaldust lent him the lugubrious mask of a nigger minstrel. He dropped his cap inside the fireguard. 'Ay, ay,' he said cheerfully.

'I'm off to bed,' said his aunt, 'Everything's ready on the table.'

'Okeydoke.'

At the passage she turned defiantly. 'And you might try to put some sense into this brother of yours.'

Mog grimaced, 'Uh-uh?' He started to eat, and supped tea noisily. He was six years older than his brother. 'Whass the fuss?'

'Nothing,' said Morri. He picked up the kitten. It might as well come out this way as any other. 'She been on to me, the old fool——'

'Oi, oi!' Mog was shocked.

'Gabbling. Been on to me 'bout girls. As though I'd give a brass tack for any girl 'bout here.' His tongue ran inevitably to the one name. 'Talking 'bout Glenys Bowen—you know.'

Mog stopped chewing, his mouth overfull. 'You haven't——'

He stroked the kitten. He could feel rage rising in him again. By God, they had only to say——

'I'm askin' you!'

'No,' he said sullenly. Something in Mog's tone made him strengthen the lie. 'Catch me!'

Mog reached for his mug. 'Okeydoke.'

'Anyhow—why?'

'Heard to-night from whassisname up Top Row—Dai Jinkins—that's him—she've took best part of ten quid from that butty of his—that left-handed feller, whassisname.'

His hard fingers closed like gates around the kitten. She squealed and her claws ripped his wrist. 'More fool you,' said Mog, as Morri watched a pinhead of blood fill the deep end of each scratch. Under the scratches he saw other abrasions and one long pale weal running back to his cuff. Well——

'And thass not all. Poor flamer!' Mog's nigger minstrel eyes rolled and then rested on the big black Bible on the sideboard. 'She's the Scarlet Woman on the White Horse, and the Sixth Plague that plagued Egypt. Boyo, she's the Fire that Burns.'

'Meaning?'

His lips were nearing the scratches when Mog's answer sickened him. He drew his wrist away. 'So you been lucky, Morri.' 'Ay,' he said after a moment, 'I been lucky.'

Mog stared over his shoulder. 'Sure?'

'I said, didn't I?'

'Okeydoke, da iawn!' He watched Mog untie his thongs and shake the grit from under his knees. So this has happened to me, he was thinking; no-one can do anything for me, and to-night she'll go to Cardiff and that'll be the end. He saw Mog glance at him again, uneasily, and hated his brother. He was glad when he went upstairs for his bath. For a while he sat on, looking at his wrist. When at last he knew what he must do it was a quarter to twelve. She would be catching the train at the Gelli: he would join her at the Red Vein halt. He didn't move till he felt the kitten clawing at his leg.

When Mog came downstairs after bathing he found the room empty and the door ajar. He was worried, but closed the door, sat down, and lit a fag-end. He was at the end of his smoke when he noticed the kitten under the table. He picked her up, but she was dead. Blood and froth were about her mouth and nostrils, her bones yielded everywhere under his hands.

‘Morri?’ he whispered. ‘For God’s sake, Morri?’

He hurried to the door and stood listening, watching. He could hear the wagons being shunted into the Red Vein sidings, and the sky filled with blood as they fed the ovens at Cwrt Mawr. ‘Where are you, our kid?’

He tugged on his boots and was crossing the bailey when he heard the twelve-ten for Cardiff pull out of the halt. Soon it passed him, slithering on the down gradient. It whistled, one long shrill blast, and slid into the Penllwyn tunnel.

The whistle hung on the air like a shriek. ‘Oh, Morri,’ he cried softly, ‘where are you? Where are you, our kid?’

## *Beyond the Trees*

GEORGE EWART EVANS

Just before dusk the group of trees beyond the aerodrome sharpened the line of their branches and stood out on the horizon like a fantastic oriental script. The 'plane came in low against a slate-grey sky, just clearing the sea-wall; a weary bird. As it circled into the wind it gained height in a last laborious climb and then with cruel decision it crashed beyond the trees. A fan of flame shot up and fixed itself in a roaring glow. The ammunition exploded in bursts and the Verey signal cartridges made bright arcs, falling leisurely round the fire and leaving a wake of small stars.

Two of the ground crew, Jock Davidson and Harry Brooks, saw the 'plane coming in. Brooks, an easy-natured giant, with his cap perched on the back of his head, straightened up and pointed as he saw her limping flight. The two watched in silence as she made the difficult half-circle. The 'plane was animated by her struggle to come home and, as they watched, they thought of the engines they had tended, the fuselage they had inspected; not specifically, but as a vague background to their suspense at her difficult return. Will she make it? During the few moments between the 'plane's first appearance over the sea-wall and the point when she made her fleet angle to earth, no part of the mind wavered over any other aspect but the visual drama of the return. The 'plane has been out on reconnaissance and she comes back. Like a winged bird she comes back. Will she get in safely? There was even a strange elation at witnessing such a struggle—a brief cathartic pulse, when the mind was focused wholly outside itself and when some of the courage of the participants seeped through to the observer.

And then came the crash and the high feeling gave place to unspoken horror. For the first time they became directly aware of the crew—apart from the aircraft. As the flames flowered instantly out of the crash, they stood immobile and then, Jock, a middle-aged man with a square, bony face and deep-set eyes, shouted out:

'Good God, they've got it!'

Unloosed from the tightness of their feelings, they started running along the perimeter road towards the crash. Harry Brooks shouted:

'Which one is it, Jock?'

The other shook his head.

'Can't be sure. She had in-line engines. It may be O, or it may be W for William.'

As they ran they saw a man standing on a mound just outside the perimeter. He was shouting and waving his arms. Then he shaped them into a large O.

'O for Orange. Brassie and Williams!'

Their running slackened and fell into an uneven, spasmodic walk. Harry Brooks cupped his hands and shouted to the men in front:

'Are they getting them out?'

They had seen the fire tender rushing towards the crash almost before they had started running. But those in front inverted their thumbs:

'They haven't got a chance. They can't get near them.'

And then they stopped on the concrete road, each falling back on himself, knowing that the crash was something that he himself would have to wrestle with. Out of the humdrum of day-to-day, there had emerged suddenly a new challenge, or, rather, an old challenge in a new form:

All that is happening over there beyond the trees must be answered in our minds. Something is happening to us as well. What do we know of death?

Before they had time to anaesthetise the ache with trite words or the easy expression of horror, the happening had bitten deeply into their souls. Then Big Harry said:

'Brassie and Williams! We saw them off!'

And Jock answered:

'Ay. Not two hours' since. Christ, you can't add it up.'

The words were for the dead men, but their feelings were focused as much on themselves. Underneath the true sympathy was the thought:

And we too are mortal.

They walked slowly back along the road, stopping occasionally to look back at the fire. It was flaring up higher, and then they heard a series of quick-following explosions as the cannon-shells went off, spreading out the flames into sharp, many-fingered arms. Jock stopped:

'O for Orange has gone! The last O was an unlucky kite.'

They talked very little for the rest of the way back, nothing further about the crew. They felt that they were spectators at a realistic tragedy. Nothing should be said while the action lasted. Words were hollow and no real feeling could be held in them. And since each was striving to keep the grimness of the happening away from himself, to let it pass gently through the portals of his inmost self, well-scrutinised and subtly changed, to talk of it at that time was to split his own defences and to shame himself with a comment that was not sincere.

They cycled down to the cookhouse just outside the camp. The fire now burned with a red wholeness, lighting up the darkened backcloth of

the sky. They tried to ignore it as they cycled by. At the tea-table Big Harry was as cheerful as usual. He shouted greetings all round, then when his cheeriness began to ebb, he turned to a downy moustached youth opposite him and asked:

'When are you going on leave, Joe?'

Leave was a subject which always brightened things up.

'Fourteenth, with a bit of luck.'

'A good institution is leave,' Jock said, with conviction.

But in spite of the talk, easily skimming the old topics, the fire still kept breaking into their thoughts. When they came out, it was no longer the leaping axle of the countryside; it burned now with smooth intensity, making a pyramid in the darkness. As they went further away from the camp, they saw its whiteness through a screen of trees. Each tree stood up, black against the white cone, a phrase in a hidden language, pointing a meaning that was felt vaguely, though none the less significantly, in the liminal tracks of the understanding. The trees gave the fire a ritual setting; another sacrifice to the new Necessity.

Later they lay on adjacent beds in the billet, watching a card game in the centre space between the beds. One of the players suddenly threw down his cards on the table and said:

'It's always the best who get it. They were the two best chaps in the Squadron.'

Then they paused to consider the crash. Now that the fire had died down, no longer did it appear as a burden to bring their thoughts to the dead airmen:

'Do you remember when they were on the last detachment? They looked after the peasants like their own brothers. Took us all to tea and then a pub afterwards.'

Big Harry and Jock got up from the bed and joined in the talk. And the crash lifted their speech from its everyday level:

They had died quickly. Their flame was out before the fire started. It was, perhaps, a better death than the slow death of the sea or the living death of the war prisoner, or the slow, noisome death of the after-war, where neither courage nor comradeship is remembered. But Jock said that death is a bitter thing whenever you meet it; and it was hard for the people of the airmen. Brassie's people in Canada separated by a long grief even from the death of their son and Williams' family weeping against the wall of their memories.

Waking and sleeping that night, they remembered the white glow of the fire. It lit up an unfamiliar track of the mind where at various times throughout their lives they had struggled with the image of death, the open-lidded coffin or the child crying for his lost mother.

Then they awoke to a new day. As they cycled up to the camp and looked over towards the trees, the crash of the previous night was as remote as a winter's day imagined in the blaze of high summer. Big Harry drew the back of his hand across his nose as he did before speaking, but he held his words. There were three soldiers, just visible, moving around the wreckage.

Back in the hangar, after they had put on their overalls in that brief spell of talk before beginning the work of the day, the young airman with the moustache said:

'Not much left of O.'

'There wouldn't be, laddie. Have you been over to look?'

The youth nodded, enjoying his importance:

'One of the swaddies was telling me they've only found two coins and a belt-buckle.'

Big Harry rose impatiently from the under-carriage against which he had been resting.

'You mustn't believe everything they tell you, Joe.'

They moved to their various jobs in the hangar. They wanted to forget the fire, and they were reluctant to talk about it. It was as if they proposed to themselves: Brassie and Williams have been remembered. Last night they were paid their due homage. To-day they are forgotten. That afternoon a wagon with the debris of the crash passed the hangar. Big Harry was astride the fuselage of a 'plane. He called out:

'There she goes, Jock. What a mess!'

Jock turned from his position on the wing and paused to look at the wagon of debris:

'And to think we spent three days of last week on her!' Already they had dissociated the crash from the death of the fliers. Never after this would it touch them so nearly, penetrating and causing a turmoil which reached to the roots of living.

Yet when they heard of the funeral they had a strange feeling of unquiet. The fire did not finish all. They were bringing up the dead again. Part of them protested though reason told them there would have to be a funeral. They talked about it in the billet. Big Harry said:

'Where it is to be?'

'From the 'drome to the village'.

'They'll be detailing some blokes for the funeral party. How about you, Harry? You would look well doing a slow march.'

Big Harry replied with unusual seriousness:

'I was pretty pally with Brassie and Williams, but I wouldn't go to the funeral if I could help it.'

'Why is that?' the youth asked relentlessly.

He drew his hand across his nose:  
 'I'd tell you if I knew, mate.'

No one wanted to go on the funeral party. The abstract setting of the fire and their sentimentalising of the dead had purged the happening of its dross, but now the funeral would bring a loath memory to drag over the waste of death and they would have to face it all again in another setting.

The morning was low with heavy clouds and a continuous downpour of rain. The procession was to circle the main hangars and pass by the 'planes lined up outside. Beside each 'plane stood three airmen ready to take the salute. Their black oilskins glistened in the rain. The coffins were on a flat lorry and behind were the aircrews in slow march in threes. Big Harry and Jock and the rest of the ground-crews watched from inside the roadway, the slow graceless marching and the gloom of the following faces were a denial of those who had flown in clear and sunlit skies.

For now they were passing in no mystery. They had not gone to their long home through the anonymous portals of the flames. The fire had not done its work well enough. Now their ashes were given a name, and these and all the necrophilic trappings would be the heavy burden of the memory. Brassie and Williams were not the happy men of the mess; the two schoolboys wrestling on top of the flat watch-tower; they were—strongest of all now—the morning dripping sadness and frustration, the futile striving up a staircase to drop into the darkest pit at its top; the greyness of all living.

Before they battered the scene down into a long oblivion once more they saw the grimace of the future dead. And Big Harry, groping his feeling of the wrongness of it, said with vigour:

'Who the hell thought of funerals?'

Jock raised his chin and nodded his head solemnly, but the others stared at Harry not understanding. He could not explain what he felt:

Brassie and Williams died beyond the trees. They are enough to remember them.

## *Museum Music*

DOMHNALL Ó CONAILL

The Museum was in a public park. Always as kids we wanted to get inside and look around, but you weren't allowed inside until you were over sixteen unless you were accompanied by an adult. On Sunday afternoons lots of us would stand on the entrance steps and

try to persuade grown-up people to take us in with them. They never did. I used to gaze through the open swing door where I could see a white marble statue of a lady with no clothes on. If, thought I, this is where you can see it, what must it be like in the places which are hidden? Sometimes we'd try to rush in with a group of people; but always the porter (who wore a ridiculous tall silk hat decorated with red and gold braid) would stop us.

I longed to be grown up and go and walk around the museum. I used to think myself, the very moment I'm grown up I'll go there and see everything myself. Then somehow when I was grown up I never thought about it.

When I was twenty I remember that my sister and I heard that concerts were held, free of charge, in the museum on certain Monday nights. We decided to go.

When the Monday night came and we had come home from work and had had our tea we went off to the park. It was winter, a dark and wet night; at the park gates the park keeper asked us what we wanted. We said we were going to the concert in the museum. He said 'Keep to the main path'. He distrusted us because we looked happy.

Inside the museum I noticed the nude lady, but as the lights weren't fully on I could hardly see her. Anyway I'd lost interest in her and the museum. We walked into a big lecture hall.

At one end of this hall was a platform with a piano on it and all around it were palmy sorts of plants in pots. The hall was full of bent-wood chairs and down the walls on each side were warm pipes. Already lots of people had arrived and they were all sitting close to the walls, keeping warm. As I looked at them I noticed that they were old, there wasn't a young person there except my sister and I. They were poor people too, tramps, old age pensioners, and people who looked as though they hadn't had a meal for years. I realised that they came here because they had no money to go anywhere else and as this place was warm and light they came to be comfortable and those who were lucky enough to have newspapers could read.

At eight o'clock a big fat dark-haired lady came on to the platform. Some of the old women who were still respectable began to clap their hands. The old men just went on talking to each other. The fat lady was Madame Vaskina, a Russian singer. She was dressed in a black velvet evening gown trimmed with scarlet lace, jewels glittered on her fingers, her eyes were black and passionate. She spoke in broken English: 'My lurvley friends, my charming people, to-night my students and I shall zing for you. Why should we not zing? Why should we not be 'appy? Why should not everyone be 'appy?'

She glanced around the hall at all the people sitting by the warm pipes. 'Music, my friends, music is what ze wurld needs. If zere is no music, zere is no lurve, and if zere is no lurve, zere is no life.'

An old man who must have been deaf said to someone in a loud voice: 'What was that horse in the two o'clock?'

Madame Vaskina didn't notice it she went on talking: 'To-night my youngest student will zing. E is very shy, you must clap loud when you zee him. You ladies will lurve him, e is so 'andsome. First, zo, I will zing for you a leetle Russian song by Mussorgsky. It is ze story of a man wandering across the steppes of Russia. E looks up at ze sky and ze stars. E feels zo lonely that e wants to die. Why should I live and suffer? What use am I? e says, and e feels ze tears on 'is face, then as e cries e remembers 'is wife and children whom e must return to. Then e knows that e must not be unhappy. It is a very beautiful song and if any of you do not understand ze Russian, ze music will speak to you.'

A young lady opened the piano, played a few bars, then Vaskina began to sing. She had a beautiful contralto voice that echoed through the hall and made the small park outside the museum seem as though it were eternity. Sometimes as she whispered the words you could hear the rustle of a page being turned over by one of the old men reading his newspaper, but the rustle didn't disturb, it was like the sound a mouse makes, it only helps you to remember the quiet. But when her voice swelled up, it was like thunder in the mountains.

She finished the song and a few of us began to clap. When we had finished, she spoke: 'Thank you, thank you, I knew zat you would like zat song, I used to sing zat when I was young; but now ze young man is going to zing for you. Remember e is only a young man and please, please, all orf you, show 'im ow much you lurve to 'ear im zing.'

The young man walked on to the platform. He was about twenty, a pleasant English face, fair hair, blue eyes. His hair was thin and straight and he stood shyly by the piano. Madame Vaskina patted his shoulder and said to us all: 'E will zing to you an aria from *La Bohème*, "Your tiny 'and is frozen".'

All the old women applauded and some of the old men looked up from their newspapers to see who was going to interrupt their reading. He began to sing. His voice, after Vaskina's, was small and thin and cold; he knew which note he had to get and he got them, but he had no sense of colour, no feeling and no passion. As he sang, Madame Vaskina stood at the side of the platform watching the audience. Just as he finished, she led the clapping; everyone joined in, she rushed to the piano, shook hands with him, led him to the front of the platform and said to us all: 'I knew you would lurve him, e is zo young, zo

innocent,' she smiled with her big rich mouth and her dark eyes and jewelled fingers glittered. 'E is zo shy'. Quickly she took his head in her hands and gave him a big warm kiss.

At that, the old men stopped reading, looked at each other and whispered; the old women laughed. Madame Vaskina said 'If e wants to zing. To zing Big' and she threw her arms wide apart, 'to be full of passion, e must kiss lots of women, e must lurve, e must feel so much in 'is zinging.' She looked at a thin poor old maid who was sitting on the front row; 'Am I not right? Is it not zo?'

The deaf old man somewhere at the back said aloud: 'That's going too far. That's encouraging people to be bad.'

Madame Vaskina winked her eye to everyone and laughed: 'I will zing for you again, myself, I will zing an aria from *Carmen*.' The girl at the piano began, but Vaskina was already talking to us all again. She told us about Spain, about the colour of the hot sky, the rocks and stones on the hillsides, the fierce men and their passion, and the beautiful women who would kill for love. They would not let another person take away what they loved and they were right. It is when you love that the badness of hate comes into you. You cannot help it, you must obey your heart, you think you won't but really you can do nothing. You cannot really love enough. And if you cannot live with the person you love why should you not die? This song the gypsy sings, there is fire in her heart. Oh the Spanish gypsies, they are bad, they are wicked; but they love and their love is strong and big like the sky, terrifying as angry sea or the power of God.

The piano began again. Vaskina sang. It was wonderful to hear her voice expressing all the savage beauty of passion. Some of the old men were so disturbed that they had to stop reading their newspapers and listen to her singing. One close to me said: 'She's not bad, you know'. And her singing was big and coarse and strong and harsh as passion should be. You felt that she had blood in her veins, the poor people felt it too; it made them feel cold and unprotected as though they were face to face with some old fear, some old terror they had thought was over.

When she had finished, everyone clapped. They could not help it. Vaskina tried to talk; but she had lost all her breath and her huge bosom heaved up and down. Then she announced the next item: 'A song from a sweet young girl, a song you all love, "Cherry Ripe".'

A plain, tall girl with brown hair and a yellow silk evening gown stood by the piano. She sang, and the old men began to whisper, the old women pushed in closer to the warm pipes. When she had finished

they clapped, and waited for Vaskina to come and talk to them. Instead, a young man came out with a violin and said in a half-audible voice that he was going to play a piece by Schubert. He played, and half way through his playing Vaskina came back. Everyone in the hall whispered about her. When the young man had finished his piece, Vaskina said: 'We shall now 'ave an interval. Ah, my friends, if only we could all drink wine.' As she said that, the old men became interested. 'But we cannot, it is a pity, but we shall 'ave to do without it. If any of you would like a cup of tea and a cake you can come and 'ave one. Marie, that is the girl who sang "Cherry Ripe" brought us tea and cakes. Zo everyone come down 'ere and let us all be 'appy.'

Everyone shuffled their feet about, then an old woman got up and walked towards Vaskina. Soon everyone was down there, and cups of tea and cake were passed around. I got close to Vaskina and looked at her. She was about fifty, she had perfume on, but somehow the warm smell of her body came through it. She was tall and had big bones, her skin was a warm brown colour, and as she passed the tea around she greeted some of the old women who she knew from being at previous concerts. To one old man she said: 'I saw you reading your paper when you were at ze back of ze 'all and I was zinging. Zat was wrong of you, but zen, I suppose you don't zink I can zing. Ah well, 'ere I 'ave some foreign magazines with pictures of me in zem.' She handed them around and we all gazed at them. In some of them she was on the steps of theatres, and holding bouquets, in others she was sitting in a café drinking wine with three or four men. In one she was with a little child who was holding on to her hand. 'Zat', she explained, 'is my son Anton, e is a big man now and e is in Paris. E was a beautiful child as you can see; but now I zink he is fat like me. 'Is father is tall and slim and is . . .' and she never finished. She saw something over the heads of us all, and when we turned to see what it was she was looking at, she said: 'I thought I saw a leetle bird fluttering in, but it was only the wind against the curtains.' She talked again about her singing and the lovely places she had been in.

Then the second half of the concert was on again. She said she would sing us some folk songs to start with, and then she would let the students give us a little concert while she washed up the teacups, and when she had finished she would come back and sing.

It seemed a long time before she came back. Then she sang again, By this time some of the older and weaker people had gone to sleep: she came down off the platform and walked around the hall singing to us all. She tried to make us join in with her, but none of us were good enough. Finally she announced that this song would be the last song of

the evening. She sang 'Softly Awakes My Heart'. She had all the power and barbaric beauty of the Old Testament in her voice; it was grand and big, made you forget all the poor derelict people lying around, only sheltering from the rain. Everyone applauded. They were just about to let their clapping fade away when a sudden gust of wind shook the museum, and the sound of rain came persistent against the windows. They thought of the cold outside and the wet and for some of them nowhere to go. They clapped on. She silenced them: 'I will zing, just one more zong for you. It is by Tschaikowsky: "None but ze Weary 'eart"'.

She smiled to us all before she began, then slowly she began, the words came over in her peculiar English. It was as though her singing were more powerful than the wind and the rain, for it made everyone forget it. She stood there in black and scarlet, singing with all her heart, and as each word came, it came into your heart the way something you know is really beautiful can touch you inside.

The song over, she said to us all: 'Good-night and may God bless you. I would lurve to kiss you all, but it is late and the museum must close.'

Outside in the rain I could hardly speak to my sister. She said the singing was beautiful and she had loved every moment of it; but I couldn't speak. I felt as though I would never be a child again. It was a sad thought. I was happy to know so much more about life, and sad when I realised that never again would I be able to have the same experience.

## *A Spring Day on the Hill*

PETER JAMIESON

We boys kept a little behind the men on our way to the hill. It was mid-spring and the sheep-driving was on, bringing most of the men and boys of the dale to the pastures in the hill. The hill pastures stretched for miles, from the nessland where the green of the old void croft fields attracted the sheep to the fences and gates away to the south. The hill rose to about seven hundred feet, and the cliffs at its base were anything from ten to a hundred feet in height. Each man knew his own sheep by marks cut in the ears, but sheep-driving on the common pastures was communal work, all doing an equal share of work. It was hard work driving the sheep over the steep hill, with its many dells, little streams, moorland wastes and green swampy patches. It was very

lightsome work for all that. When the sheep were at last all safely rounded up and penned in the stone enclosures there was plenty of fun and laughter, as the women and girls came there to work with the sheep. They brought food and drink with them. The sheep work became a social gathering of the crofters in the dale.

We separated into groups of twos and threes, some going away to the south fences to drive the flocks north along, others to the nessland to round up the sheep and drive them up the slope to meet in with the flocks from the southward. Some had to go down to the cliff-top to look for sheep that had gone down over the steep, almost sheer, cliff-face to hunt along the shore for seaweed. The sheep were partial to a bit of seaweed at times. When it ebbed they had a habit of going down over the narrow zig-zagging tracks. Sometimes they would wade across the small isles nearby, hunting there for patches of grass. They seemed to know when it was coming a flood tide and would aye come nearer to the shore, cropping among the tufts on the rocks as they went, until with the water swirling over what had been a half-dry stretch of shore they scampered across to the mainland again. Generations of sheep had made these narrow footpaths on the cliffs. They said the 'worm in the sheep's hoof twitched' when the tide ebbed. Something drew the animals to the rocky shore, all the same. This put extra work on the crofters out on the hill 'kaain' the sheep'. Many a man had used these pathways when in the cliffs looking for eggs. The cliffs were alive with birds, and now as we headed up the incline to go north along to the void croft, we could hear the birds calling loudly as they wheeled about near their nesting places. My companion was a boy from the neighbouring house. I was fifteen and he was seventeen. He said he was going away south to sail after the boar-delving was finished. We felt ourselves to be men, now we were left to drive sheep on our own, with dungarees and rubber thigh-boots on. The wind ruffled our thick fair hair as we strode forward, for we had not heeded the old folk who kept telling us to put something on our heads now with the changeable weather in the spring.

Going at a good pace we were soon half-way up the slope always pointing with our staffs and shouting to the dogs to be quick and 'get away before' the sheep, or to 'come here in behind', or 'down by them' and all the other peculiar shepherd cries we knew so well.

We were in high spirits and whistled and laughed as we walked ever upwards. It was our intention to go right to the summit, right to the 'old men's house', a cluster of grass-grown stones that was said to have been a sort of watch-house long ago, where we could take a blow before proceeding north by the other—western—side of the hill down to the

void croft. It was a day with a cold nip in it for all the sunshine that gleamed between the fleecy clouds. The shadows of the clouds fell on the hill ever moving and vanishing as the wind bowled them along. I had a notion the shadows looked like great maps of continents. We had a laugh trying to name the 'continents' as the shadows flitted over the hill. The birds were loud and shrill at the cliffs. The sea below was a cold dark blue, with the surge a line of white at the shore. The sheep knew we were after driving them. They scurried away before the dogs, some of the heavy-bellied ones lagging behind the others. A few lambs were among the flocks, their mothers turning to look at us, stamping their feet at the snapping dogs. We lit cigarettes and sat down at the old wall, taking our fill of the wide scene of hills, firths, skerries spreading out far below us. Presently my companion got up and went behind the wall to make water. I had to do the same; then we said we would race each other down the slope.

The dogs entered into the fun of the thing. They ran around us, and away on ahead, barking with joy. We were two daft youngsters that day! I won the race and stood gasping for breath near the ruined dyke of the old croft where a lot of sheep had been grazing. They scurried about, collecting into a frightened bleating drove. My companion came up and gave me the packet of cigarettes he had promised if I beat him.

Sitting down to take breath we set the dogs after the sheep. They soon had them scurrying up the heathery incline. My mate was feeling in a playful mood that day. He started to tease me, pressing me down on the grass, pummeling me with his hands. We skylarked together for a while, the dogs coming back to sit yelping and whining as they watched us. The sun had gone when we both got up, red of face and panting. The air was a lot colder. My friend said it was coming snow, and before long I saw he was right.

The wind had gone northerly, snow was coming over the sea from the skerries. Already the hill was turning white. We hurried away, and the loitering sheep gave up nibbling at the grass, and began trudging up the hill, one after the other. We were going after them, not far from the top of the cliff south by a little from the old croft, when my mate stopped and held up his hand. 'I hear a lamb!' he said, pointing to the cliff. 'It's over there, somewhere!' It was a lamb right enough. We stood listening to the frantic bleating. 'It can't get up!' the boy said, a troubled look coming on his face; 'and with this snow now....' He said he would go over the cliff to look for the lamb. I advised him not to do this, he might slide and go clean over to his death on the rocks. I said we should hurry home over with our sheep and report it to the men. He would not have this, and began running towards where the

cries came from. It was a brave thing for the lad to do. I saw it was no use trying to stop him, his mind was made up. I called the dogs to heel and went after him. It was snowing thickly by this time. I was feeling the cold as the wind blew the snow in icy wreathes about me. I beat my arms across my chest and stamped about. I began to wish I had taken my father's advice and put on coat and cap. I could hardly see my companion as he clambered over the edge. I ran forward and told him to take care.

'O.K.!' he shouted back.

I waited a while, aye shouting and whistling. He whistled back for a time and I felt glad, as I liked the boy greatly and would have been sorry if ill came to him. After a time I could hear nothing but the howling wind and surge at the shore. I was beginning to feel anxious, when I heard him shouting: 'I've found it! I'm coming up!'

After a while I saw him clambering over the edge with a little white lamb in his arms. I ran to grab hold of him, for I was scared he might slip back over on the snowy ledge. The dogs were yelping with joy to see him again. He lay a while breathing hard, rubbing some blood off his cheek from a sharp stone that had fallen and grazed him on its way to the shore. Feeling better he got up and we set out up the hill as fast as we could go. He carried the lamb in his arms. It snuggled against his breast, aye bleating. He said he would give it to his sister for a caddy-lamb. He said she would bring it up with milk out of a bottle. We got to the summit and were glad to meet with the other men and boys driving the main bulk of the flock down the home side of the hill to the sheltered enclosure at the croft-dyke. Lord, it was terribly cold there on the hill that day, with the blinding 'kaavies' of snow almost choking us.

## *Officer's Wife*

BETTY MILLER

How familiar this business is. The mouth against one that gently insistently, fluctuates. Invoking the milk: that which is distilled subtle and bland, out of one's own flesh. On it goes; an intimate exchange, effortless and peaceful. By no means, let me tell you, a poetic process. Every now and then, in ardour, Sue will snort, like a young horse. Her frail blue fingers, with the vicious baby-nails, pinch convulsively at me. I must cut her nails to-night. Remind me.

As usual, I've not finished my own lunch yet. I sit sipping at my cup of coffee, brushing idly, with my handkerchief, at the drops that lapse on to the coconut-sized head beneath. I sip, and, automatically, I gaze out of the window. I spend a good deal of my time, these days, gazing out of this particular window. It's as if the view I obtain from here has become part of me: it fits me: my vision slips into these familiar contours as into a glove, occupying them with ease and satisfaction. The scalloped roof of the verandah, overhanging the window: the big yew-tree on the lawn, with its branches sweeping the earth in a low curtsey: beyond that, the lake, in which water-fowl, whose name I've never learnt, wag and tipple, and now and then, waited-for event, the lone swan appears, sailing along, serene and unattainable, like a ship independent of prevailing winds.

This landscape is by no means devoid of human interest. On the contrary. Immediately beyond the lake, where the garden is ruled to a close by a wire fence, fields begin: and on the rising ground of these, a row of council houses has recently been built. To my 'hostess', Mrs. Cameron's, unabating resentment, they face us squarely, a row of brick houses, evenly aligned, ugly in their rawness, the long narrow gardens stretching down to the dividing fence: so that we can, on a Monday, count the sheets, the knickers hanging out to dry; watch the husbands digging, shirt-sleeved, among the Brussels; hear the barking of their dogs, the contented ejaculations of their hens just off the nest-box; or the irridiscent call of their rooster spiralling through the air. There he goes, now; I can see him: a fine bird; high-stepping, crowned in fire. He belongs to the woman with one arm, who lives in the end house. I watch her, sometimes, when she comes out to dig in the garden, feed her hens or hang out the washing. She's very quick and adept at whatever she does, giving you the impression, as you watch her, that for jobs such as these, two hands are by no means a necessity. She was cleaning out the hen-coop, at the end of her garden, one day, when I came to put Sue in her pram: I noticed, then, that that single hand of hers is very large and over-developed. She herself is so small and slight, that she seemed to me, at that moment, to be all hand; a faded apologetic little body, attached to that muscular, prehensile hand, that drags her in its wake about the house and garden, always active, always doing, untiringly at grips with the world about it. . . .

Time, surely, to change Sue to the other breast? Wonder how long she's had—I always forget to look at the clock. I cover up one shoulder, uncover the other: the little mouth snaps-to like a ring of elastic: she's on to the milk, already, eyes shut, blindly drawing. Complacent little parasite. How simple to live entirely through one's mouth. Drink the

world into one. . . . The small coal fire which is all Mrs. Cameron considers necessary to warm this big room, mumbles and whines. The tinsel black coal is slowly consumed in its own heat. On the mantelpiece above, silver-framed, Regent-street style, the photograph of Hugh looks down upon us. Long ago, this photo has been rendered meaningless by familiarity: constant looking has defaced it, like a coin worn smooth by long handling. Now, when I turn to it, it brings me no reminder, no original emotion: it remains itself: meaningless: a worn coin that rattles back into the slot, unusable.

Sue feeds on. Unaware of the fact, which makes no difference to her existence, that she has never seen her father; or been seen by him. Sue was conceived, carelessly, in the final stages of an embarkation leave. It was as if grief and bitterness were fertile ground; beneficial, to the unsuspected seedling. Anyway, nothing, after she had made her presence known, could dislodge her. And here she is. To Hugh, in Africa, only a snapshot; a belief. To me, since he's not here to share her, a sort of foundling: a seed sown on the wind, taking unbidden root. . . . I look down at her. She suckles placidly: certain of her place in the sun. She's so helpless that she can't lift her head, yet she has the power to command my whole life, exerting a domination so disproportionate to her size and strength, that the realisation of it sometimes amazes me.

Looking out of the window, I think, as I sometimes do, of my other existence: separate, quite other, from the one I'm leading now. I think of the too-small, too-expensive, modern Georgian house, in a Chelsea slum, with its satin curtain, its wood-block floors, its pale blue bathroom. . . . I remind myself, surprised, that I once had a house of my own: was once mistress in my own home. Since the war, I've had no home of my own. I'm what's known as a Paying Guest. For me, and for others like me, advertisements such as these are couched: 'Lady would take another, preferably Officer's wife, in own well-appointed house . . .' So hospitable, on the surface; so genial, withal so genteel: behind it, the desire to escape the compulsory billeting of slum children: to supplement, with little trouble and no outlay, an unearned income. . . . Hence, as the days go by, along with the exaggerated friendliness, the bandying of Christian names, the obverse of the medal: the noticeable lack of quality and variety in the food dished up: the watchful eye on the consumption of coal: the o-so-light allusions to unpunctuality at meals, to the frequent use of the electric iron for the baby's washing. . . . Until the war, I never realised what it does to one living in another woman's house. I can now say this, quite categorically: it never works. Even sharing a house with friends as I've also done, never works. One woman must have the total say in a household, other-

wise there's hell to pay. I can only go on living here because I voluntarily accept Mrs. Cameron as the dominant influence in the house; because I'm prepared to accept her ways, her ideas, even her humour. It's a very subtle relationship. Despite the fact that her own action brought, and maintains, me here, she looks on me as an intruder in her household. She resents my ways; my voice; my appearance: deep within her, implacably, she resents my presence here, out of which, all the while, she derives so much incidental profit.

Sue's fast sleep; sucking away, purely mechanically. I detach her: her head lolls sideways, her replete mouth gleams, as if inlaid with mother o' pearl. I take off her sodden loincloth; attend to her: dress her, finally, in her woollies. Now she's ready: I stand up, and, putting her to my shoulder, as they taught me to do in the nursing home, I rub her back, in case she has wind. Her chicken-soft head touches my cheek in an unknowing caress. The portrait of Hugh looks at me from the mantelpiece. Captain Stimson: peaked cap, brass buttons, Sam Browne belt, all complete. How handsome he is, I think, unwillingly. Unwillingly, because in a queer way, the fact of his absence renders his good looks, as his other endearing qualities, painful to me: so many losses: all debit, now, instead of credit. I think of the days spent together before embarkation: of that which hung, unformulated, between us at certain moments: the knowledge of those infidelities, inevitable in a long separation, which I will never ask about, nor he mention, in the days to come. . . . Nevertheless, and despite this rational attitude, I'm jealous of these as yet uncommitted infidelities. I'm resentful, in the midst of my sorrow, that he can sail away, free in himself, as are all those who are under orders, to a new land, new circumstances, leaving me here, bereaved, to face the sameness, the solitude: I'm jealous, too, of the camaraderie of men, the link between them in these circumstances, stronger than they admit, or perhaps know, and which, I am aware, is not without its emotional compensations.

I turn away quickly. Well, let's put this lump in her pram. I open the French windows, and go down the steps into the garden. The pram is where I left it; at the end of the path; with the brakes on. As I come across the lawn, I can see the one-armed woman, at work, as usual, among her vegetables; stooping, intent. Sue's asleep: small eyes sealed in the fat pod of each lid. Her mouth is pursed in a severe, repressive expression. I lay her down against the white lawn pillow, to sleep for the afternoon; sleep, like a mole, through the meaningless days of her infancy. . . . She's no trouble, thank heaven. Little pleasure, either. I sigh. Perhaps things will be different when I have Hugh back: when this queer suspended existence I lead is over: when I can *feel* again. . . .

Glancing up, to adjust the hood, I see the woman with one arm. She's come right down to dividing fence, and is standing among the dahlias and chrysanthemums she's planted there. She has a small sunken face; devitalised hair, without colour, almost without substance. She hesitates, smiling at me in an uncertain sort of way. Suddenly she ventures to speak. 'Nice day, isn't it?'

'Yes, isn't it?' I try not to show how disagreeably affected I am, by the fact that she has chosen to speak to me. She continues to smile, half apologetic, looking from me to the pram, and I realise that she wants to see Sue. Unable to do otherwise, complying, I tilt the pram down: 'Here's the baby,' I say. I add, for want of something better to say: 'Fast asleep, as usual.'

'Ah, the love!' She's smiling; decayed eye-tooth frankly exposed. She stands on her toes to get a better view. 'And so good—not a peep out of her.'

'Yes—she's a good baby.' I wonder when this is going to end. The sight of her standing here, with her maimed, impoverished body, her timid face, has a curious effect on me: arouses in me a sort of violent opposition. I don't want to offend her, but I've an uncontrollable desire to escape from her presence: to break off this unsought relationship. This discomfort, this irrational fear of her, is, of course, connected with her deformity: with the bitterness I feel must animate her, in consequence of it: the inevitable, driving, resentment. A sudden silence falls between us, as if she had sensed, somehow, the direction of my thoughts. Her eyes are still upon us. Unable to tolerate that gaze, I turn away abruptly, and pretend to busy myself, tucking the blankets more firmly round the unconscious Sue: adjusting, with exaggerated care, the position of the hood. While I'm doing this, she speaks again: I hear her voice, an altered, diffident, note in it. 'Would you care for some of these, Miss?' Surprised, I turn towards her. Across the fence, she's holding out to me, in that great work-bitten hand of hers, a bunch of chrysanthemums, pink and white and mauve, with ragged, dog-eared leaves.

Something happens, then. Unexpected, and very disconcerting. For some reason, I begin to blush. For the first time in years, it seems, I'm actually blushing. I feel the vivid warmth sweep up into my face, painful, the sap of emotion, long arrested, rising again, unbidden. . . . 'Oh, but you shouldn't,' I stammer. She smiles, and says nothing; holding the flowers out, as before. Uncertain, at a loss, I take a step in her direction: I come up close to the fence. I see her eyes, then. I'm conscious of a moment of surprise. There's no resentment, no bitterness, there. They're small eyes, sunken and tired, it's true: but tranquil, and

very kind. She looks into my face. 'You take them, Miss,' she says, softly. The pungent smell of the petals reaches me. 'I can spare them, truly I can.' Putting the flowers into my hand, across the fence she smiles at me, 'I have more than I need,' she says, simply.

## *The Swimmers*

SID CHAPLIN

I still remember with joy the coolness of the running water. After seven and a half hours in the dark tunnels one appreciated it all the more. Seven and a half hours in the filthy air two hundred fathoms down, air polluted by the stench from the pony stables, by the sweat from our own bodies and by the continual reek of exploded powder.

It was hell on a miniature scale. Backbreaking travelling in passages less than five feet high, sweat running into one's eyes as rain does in a thunderstorm, projecting timber catching our bodies; the blind mice scurrying in front of us and the fungi brushing our faces. White stuff, hanging like cows' udders; festoons of pallid ferns; masses of soft coral. An underground hell constructed by moleing miners with the aid of explosives and drill. A dark hell of fierce smells and thankless labour where curses were as cheap as sweat.

But time ticked slowly by and at ten a.m. we would rush to the meeting place to be met by the deputy in charge, cursed for our misdemeanours, and sent packing to the shaft. There we would wait impatiently for the cage to take us to bank. Oh the coolness of the rushing air as the cage flashed to the surface past the misty green-wet walls of the shaft, translating us from deep darkness to the free light of day. Then it was a rush, running through the big fields where the pensioned old ponies cropped their last months of life away.

Past the big field were the first streets of Deepdown, a dirty lumping of low houses celebrated the length and breadth of Weardale with the byword 'as dirty as Deepdown'. Our house was as dirty as the rest outside, but inside it was cleaner than the most. My parents came from Upper Weardale, where cleanliness is as esteemed as wealth and a dirty house the sin against the Holy Ghost. But the winds which cleansed and swept the grey houses on the Pennine slopes blew the insidious coal dust into Deepdown houses, tingeing the wallpapers, settling in the crockery; the sly enemy of the clean order my mother loved.

We had no bath. A huge bath tin hung in the yard and we all washed in this. I would strip to the waist, wash my arms and chest and head, then the lower parts of the body. The yard wall screened me. It was grand to see the black dust peeling off, the white skin emerging. After I had finished the water was always like ink, with five inches of lather on top. Soap was my best friend.

Mother would call me. 'Are you ready to eat, lad?'

'Aye.'

'Then come and get it.'

'Aye.'

Whenever I went swimming my meal was just a light one. It consisted of chuck-in bread, as we called it, made without yeast. Spread with good butter and helped down with homegrown tomatoes from our own greenhouse it was food for the gods, never mind pitmen. Then, the meal down, it was a hurried search for costume and towel, my mother grumbling at my hasty untidiness.

'Ta-ra, mother.'

'Ta-ra, lad, an' be careful!'

Outside, Ogly Green would be waiting. We called him Ogly because his eyeballs protruded in a most unnatural manner. Parry, my other pal, was always late. His big clumsy body took more washing than ours. But he would come at last, sauntering across the Ball-Alley, his towel slung over his shoulder, his costume tied around his neck.

'Come on, lads,' he would say, 'what ye waitin' for?'

We would turn our backs on the pithead stocks, the spinning pulley wheels, the thousand jangling noises from the pit, and walk eagerly the old road to the river. The road was little used, so we could give vent to our joy, singing at the top of our voices. Free men.

Our progress was never rapid. There was a wide, mysterious ditch, its green verge overflowing on to the road. Within the ditch were green frogs, hivebound bees, scuttling field mice and sometimes a midget rabbit. We missed nothing. The road was far from straight. It was narrow and twisted like an old pitman; it bulged into hills at times, then was pocked with holes. At last the river. We would cross over it by the old stone bridge, for on the far side the slope was sandy and gentle, with tufts of trees to hide us as we undressed. But we always stood a while in the middle of the bridge arguing as to which swimming place we should go to.

One place excelled the others. We had to trespass to reach it, but when we reached it, it was ours alone. And so we would pass the more public place where the families picnicked; the secluded fields where the young couples made love; the swampy region where the snipe glided

uneasily above, afraid for the safety of their young, to our own pool. Here the river flowed through a wide vale which had been quarried out years before. The scars inflicted by the quarrymen were now healed over by the green. The fissures made by blasting were green caves, natural cubicles in which we undressed, hanging our clothes on odd branches which had found their way in, crowded out of the sunlight.

Gingerly we would step down over the great slabs of fallen stone, over the bright green grass, velvet to look at but hiding small hard pebbles, to the sand and the water. Our sand was not the golden grain of the seashore. It was dull, heavy stuff, like brown sugar, flecked with coal dust washed up from the river bed, for the hungry river sometimes uncovered surface seams of coal. There were ten yards of this sand—our beach—firm and yet kind to our feet. We would squat upon it for a while and gaze at the running river. Then the sun would strike through the interlaced trees and make the river a moving prism of coloured lights in which danced a myriad flies. Then, with loud cries we would run down the beach and plunge into the water, seeing before we entered, the split-second reflection of our bodies.

Below the water we glided like the silver minnow, peaceful in the green, half-lit depths with the glittering bubbles squeezing from our tight-knit lips, the green water-weeds swaying with our bodies' wash. At the other side we would break surface as smoothly as any submarine, with the smooth, slimy pebbles under our outstretched hands.

I wish that I could translate into words the joy of those water-actions, the water washing and spuming, the velvety motions of hands and feet, the gentle impact and caress of the slow moving river. The contending in the middle of the river: 'Ah'll give yer a try at backstroke.' 'No, over arm, to the old willow!' One, two, three, a flailing of arms and legs, a race to the willow tree. There we would clamber out of the water and perch upon the lower branches like young plucked crows, until we were almost dry. Then, tired of the heat, at a word we would dive into the minnow-haunted depths. For under the old willow was a great pit which its roots had carved and enclosed, and here we circled until our lungs were empty. Attracted by our white bodies the little fish would glide alongside, touching us with their soft lips, nibbling cautiously. Then, gasping for air, we would kick ourselves to the surface to be dazzled by the sunlight and to breathe hungrily the fresh air, gasping like otters after the chase.

But the summit of our delight was to float on our backs. Quietly, only gently sculling with the hands, as motionless as any dead, bark-stripped log, so quietly that the waterhens and their broods, like tiny Armadas, would sail freely between our quiescent bodies. Down with

the current we would float until the green willow branches above us thinned, and the pebbles in the shallows scraped our backs.

Sometimes we would grow tired of our lonely pool. Carrying our clothes we would make for the 'waterwheel'. This was two or three hundred yards down stream. It was the shell of an old mill. A great ditch ran from the river to the mill, and the turnwheel was the rusty old contraption which the millers had used to regulate the flow of water. The ditch was deep and dirty and ancient pike snouted a living in its depths. There was a dam constructed of uneven lumps of stone. This formed a deep pool even although it was broken at several points. The turnwheel made a grand diving point.

I remember the last day we spent at the turnwheel. It was early September, but quite warm. Men were marching in other countries, but we went a-swimming. We went along the old Vinovian road to get to the river, the road that the Romans built. It had been a main road in those days, but now it was deserted, and Ogly, Parry and me were now the masters of it. Centurions and pit lads, sandals and pit boots, a great difference. But we realised our kinship with the others that day. The others—the marching legionaries, the conscripted of Roman Britain.

Along the old road, through Vinovium Camp, past the Hall pond where there was, lying in the muddy bottom, a treasure in plate and jewels; down the Forty-Nine Steps, through the tall copper beeches. I remember we threw stones at the wood-pigeons as we passed. Through the woods came the sound that is familiar to every swimmer, the mingled sound of shouting and splashing. Most of the swimmers were lads from Bishop, a nearby market town. As we came nearer we could hear their high-pitched yells, the lurid oaths, and the plop-plop of their bodies impact upon the water with peculiar distinctness. Hurriedly we undressed and pulled on our costumes. Then one after the other, quick-fire, we plunged in.

Our diving was quite orthodox, but the extraordinary methods used by the Bishop lads to enter the water were more than unorthodox. They took a run of perhaps ten yards, then bounced off the parapet with incredible vim, curling up like a ball in mid-air. Just before striking the water they would snap open head first, like a well oiled jack-knife, and cleave the water smoothly. It was beautiful, thrilling, a joy to watch, and I still envy those hawker lads for their skill. They hailed from that part of Bishop known as the Batts, the great central community of the hawkers of our county. These people travel the county with their tiny pony carts, exchanging scoury-whiting (soft stone which whitens doorsteps) for old clothes and scrap iron. And oftentimes, I remember, they carried for the children balloons, streamers and singing birds on

sticks. Toy birds, of course, that sang sweetly only when you swept the stick through the air.

We soon joined with them in their sport. In ones, in pairs, in threes we dived into the foaming water. Then we ran along the top of the dam and rolled in the thick black mud that had collected there.

Someone soon discovered that the mud was firm enough to roll into balls. Mud-balls flew in all directions. It wasn't long before our bodies were covered with the black stuff. We were like niggers. Then into the water we dived to emerge clean and shining.

The sport continued until the sun was going down; a cold wind ruffled the water and struck our exposed shoulders. Our ranks thinned; reluctantly, the last of us swam ashore. As we dried ourselves the sinking sun was tippling the Pennines with blood. Red suffused everything. It seemed as if some artery had burst up there in the mountains, in the backbone of England. A stream of blood staining mountain, moor, slag-heap and river. We gazed at it with a kind of awe.

## *Army Pattern None*

L. J. DAVENTRY

He leaned against the side of the guardhouse, quiet, unseeing, listening. Around him the rest of the men shuffled their feet, talked and puffed at 'dog-ends' saved for the occasion. Various corporals and sergeants glanced sharply and sternly in all directions in an endeavour to present that aspect of keenness and alertness beloved by N.C.O.s when on parade or about to go on parade. He sighed and looked at the sky. Evening approaching and the clouds holding the first gold of sunset. As he gazed upwards the earth and the crawling men upon the earth receded unto the background of his mind.

Corporal Silt was talking. He possessed a mentality which never failed to be impressed by official documents, particularly those labelled: URGENT or SECRET, VERY SECRET, TREAT IN STRICT CONFIDENCE, COPY TO O.C. SOUTH-EASTERN COMMAND, FORWARD TO ALL SENIOR OFFICERS, etc. etc., world without end, God bless you, sir, and thank you for all your goodness. On this occasion Corporal Silt was full of a Note he had seen while sneaking around the Company Office that morning. Mark my words, he said, we'll be moving before very long. It's the water for us,

my lucky boys, and then the chance to kill a few Germans. Why don't you shut that bloody great gate of yours, Corporal Silt? Corporal Silt talking about killing Germans, Germans talking about killing Corporal Silt. Death approaching both parties. I saw it as plain as can be, he said, addressed to the O.C. and in red ink: 'Prepare your personnel for an immediate move.'

He flexed his muscles. He had not killed anybody yet, but he knew it was easy. The weapons of to-day work at high speed, with a mechanical exactitude the result of many years' scientific labour. One moment you are breathing, the tragic beauty, the next you are a goner and there is no hope in you.

Don't get seriously perturbed, however. You are lucky to be a part of now and not of a hundred years hence. Then it will be possible to snuff you out by thought transference and you will die in your mother's womb. Good luck, my dear.

Sergeant Denk, who was in charge of the Fire Picket, had seized the few minutes left before the parade to talk like a father to his men on the subject of discipline. It's absolutely no good working independently, he said, you must function like a well-oiled machine to obtain the best results. His men moved uneasily. He was one of those N.C.O.s who make excuses for their stripes, and they knew what was coming.

I am your leader, it's not my fault, he said. I didn't ask to be made up, but it became known that I'd done something of the sort in Civvy Street, so there you are. If you work *with* me we won't have any trouble. (Wrap up, Sergeant Denk, and go home, unless you want a bullet in your backside when battle commences.)

Lance-corporal Long, cook-house nonentity, was engaged in running down an officer with whom he had recently had a one-sided quarrel.

I'm sure he's crazy, said Lance-corporal Long. One minute he tells you one thing, the next, something totally different....

The face working, the tongue going up and down, the emphasis at such and such a moment, the hands moving, wonderful. Meanwhile the world waiting for the end of Man. The grass waiting to spring up between the cracks in the pavements, the stones of the houses changing, preparing. Smiling at the jumping bodies with death in their minds and the means of death in their fingers. The smile of the world and the world's life, sweet and inhuman, flowing past Man, but not through him, until the day when he becomes still and a part of the world.

Among the defaulters speculation was rife on the subject of the orderly officer and his prospective bag of victims. It's ol' Squimmy tonight, said Private Gitter, so for Christ's sake look out for your buttons

and cap badge. Another said: Yes, that dirty basket always catches you on your last night. They began a hurried last-minute inspection of themselves. Buttons were breathed on and polished with the coat cuff, toes of boots rubbed carefully on the backs of calves, etc. The pathos of the unknowing gathered together in thy sight and one only gazing at the sun and the beauty of its going. Suddenly a shout rang out: Fall in, there!

It was the R.S.M., who had crept from the hutments and upon them unobserved. In a second all was confusion and the air filled with sound, but eventually the parade sorted itself out and two rows of startled men stood awaiting a further order from the puppet-master.

Staff parade . . . shun! Standa . . . tese! Stop talking . . . stanstill anlook toyerfrunt . . . *you*. Yes, *you*, you bloody thing, you. You heap. Stick your stomach in, you're not in th family way—yet.

Ha-ha. Very funny, sergeant-major. Damned effective.

Not exceptionally well-educated, but makes a first-rate non-commissioned officer. Recommended for a second stripe. Alert and efficient at his work. Prone to obscene language, but has a way of handling men. Recommended for promotion to sergeant. And so on.

A splendid creature, Man. The highest form of life, according to himself. The young man who did not believe this stood in the centre of the front rank and jumped stiffly to attention or to the at-ease position as automatically as the rest, but his eyes remained on the sunset. He had ample opportunity to study it, for the parade stood with its rear to the Guardhouse, facing a wide expanse of unbroken skyline running to either side above the camp playing fields.

He had always been a fool about sunsets; he had even tried to paint them, long ago. This one was indeed magnificent, but it was not this so much that held him fascinated, as the perfect illusion of a tropical island in the sky created by cloud formation and enhanced by a natural colour scheme of subtle beauty. Emerald, foam-tipped waters lapped the sands of a golden beach stretching on the one hand until the curve of the island hid it from view, and on the other to a massed headland flung out some miles into blue water. Where the beach ended the rich, lush vegetation began, merging gradually into a background of tall trees blending in their turn to a purple haze....

Parade . . . shun!

The R.S.M. saluted and began to accompany the Orderly Officer on his inspection. The latter was in very good form.

Dirty buttons.

Name and number! shouted the R.S.M. at the unfortunate victim.

Face dirty, hasn't cleaned his boots.

Name and number!

Soon a busy group, furiously wielding pencil on paper and consisting of all the Orderly Sergeants in the world, trailed after Squimmy and the R.S.M. The freedom of the Press must not be imperilled. . . .

According to information received from an unimpeachable source, we have every reason to believe that Man is the Highest Animal.

Okay, okay, prove it.

Very good. On the basis of information now at hand I am in a position to state that we can now reach an altitude of 100,000 ft. and, what is more, we can drop bombs from that height.

That seems fair enough. Give an example of progress.

Certainly. From notes emanating from a generally reliable source I am able to tell you that whereas once upon a time we were able only to make weapons that killed one or two people at a sitting, we now have weapons that kill thousands in the same amount of time.

True, and very finely put. One question—is an enemy Man an inferior kind of Highest Animal?

But obviously. Shoot to kill. . . .

Squimmy paused in front of him and eyed him up and down carefully. This man hasn't shaved for two days and there's a stain on the inside of his right trouser-leg, he said bitterly.

The R.S.M. screwed up his fat face and opened his ugly mouth: There's no need to ask for *your* name and number—we know them by heart! He screamed the last five words, thrusting his face close to that of the delinquent's and breathing beer and tobacco fumes into the other's lungs. I'll make it my own personal business to see that you get a hundred and sixty-eight hours this time, he said pleasantly, and hurried off to rejoin his superior officer. . . .

The two of them had reached the end of the front rank when of a sudden the R.S.M. felt a shudder, a stir of movement in the air. It was his boast that he possessed a sixth sense which always told him when anything was wrong. Something was wrong now. He could feel it in the pit of his stomach. Glancing round he became petrified.

The most terrible thing which can happen to a parade was happening right now. A man had walked straight out of the ranks.

The man did not stop. He walked across the road and into the field on the other side, and then he broke into a run. His face was turned upwards and his arms were waving about.

They heard him laughing, and all shivered as if a cold wind had swept the parade ground.

## *Home Thoughts from Abroad*

War is a dirty business, bayonet and blood  
Stamped in the mud among fallen leaves.  
The soldier moves aloof in his mood,  
Set apart from life, and his wife forgives,  
Having no grief to quench her greed:  
Kisses, and for her the uniform lives.

This copper beech fell before no wind,  
But it never bore captivity:  
Is it then better to be dead than free  
To taste the winds and rain from the sky?  
Can we not escape among so many?

'Better to die. Better to die.'  
Easily said by the old before their fire,  
Less easy with scarecrows on the barbed wire  
And the scarred dead for company.

In the west they are dying among grass and flowers—  
Tanks mixing colour with blood for water—  
And the grass will be ragged when the next Spring airs  
Make holiday over neglected graves,  
And we did not die for wrongs of ours.

No man spoiled me save my own countrymen.  
No man stole from me save my companions.  
And I have done as much for them,  
For property, once lost, is anyone's.  
A moving watch in a dead man's hand  
Is better taken, is better turned,  
Wound and acquainted with a new touch.

Will they be at the lilacs when I have gone,  
And break down the almond trees at Osterley,  
And destroy the acacias?  
England meaning only laburnums against the sky  
And a girl under white moons  
Changing already.

Others shall have these, and my empty house.  
My daughter will marry, breed or not, die:

The wireless will bray to a new race  
And will talk glib about such as I.

A new Politics will tell an old lie;  
But no son of mine will suffer its tricks  
And our crosses will sink by the cart-tracks  
Another few feet in the dirt.

At least it is better not to die in the hard snow,  
Face trodden flat like a laced saint,  
Life-blood and hair for substitute paint  
And a hand pointing to show  
How far victory went.

It is better not to die at all,  
But to come back and say nothing  
Except that you fought for the king  
And that it was a blood-sport,  
And you were glad when it was all over,  
Let others ever how brave you are.

But you will remember only the stars  
Over the insignificant dead,  
The stupidity, the stench, a severed head,  
As you go up still stairs to bed:  
And your wife shall not guess the dreams you had,  
And you will be glad of her, like a child at her dress,  
And if you are lucky she will not love you less.

JOHN BAYLISS

## *One Generation to Another*

We, in our time, were the clean high winds from Europe  
that blew across the hopes of the baffled poor.  
And we were each rising season's coloured climbings,  
Summer loudly knocking the well-filled door.

In another time, we were Autumn's yellow treason,  
the farmer counting his ears to find them good.  
Yet we were always the dirk-cloaked, beggared conscience,  
the laugh struck down in the throat by the bitter blood.

Always the hours have been weighed in the old men's hands,  
and Scotland nourished over their final tears.  
Thus, in our father's follies breathing strength,  
the heart's weak treaties were welded unawares.

The bones of one generation say to another,  
you shall search the path that once our pleadings taught;  
and with only a slight, insignificant variation,  
your grasp elude what shapes our fingers sought.

MAURICE LINDSAY

## *On the Death of Alun Lewis*

He was astonished by the abundance of gold  
Light. In the street a beggar stretched her hand,  
Dying. Then the shudder ran through him. Once he had planned  
To out-distance the sun in a chariot. But how might he hold  
That instant, those uncurbed horses, and mix with the mould  
Her liquid shadow near the lotus and timeless sand?  
A slighter man would have noticed the ripples expand  
From the stark, regenerate symbol. But to him that cold  
Figure was real. Ah yes, he died in the green  
Tree. What was it, then, pierced him, keen as a thorn,  
And left him articulate, humble, unable to scorn  
A single soul found on Earth? O, had he seen  
In a flash, all India laid like Antony's queen,  
Or seen the highest, for which alone we are born?

VERNON WATKINS

## *Seascape*

FOR RENÉE

Our country was a country drowned long since  
By shark-toothed currents drowned:  
And in that country walk the beautiful generations,  
The dancing generations with grey eyes,

Whose touch would be like rain, the generations  
 Who never thought to justify their beauty.  
 There once the flowering cherry grasped the wall  
 With childish fingers, once the gull swung crying  
 Across the morning or the evening mist:  
 Once high heels rattled on the terrace  
 Above the water's talk, and the wind lifted  
 The hard leaves of the bay; the white sand drifted  
 Under the worm-bored rampart, under the white eyelid.  
 Our country was a country washed with colour.  
 Its light was good to us, sharp limning  
 The lover's secret smile, the fine-drawn fingers:  
 It drew long stripes between the pointed jaws  
 Of sea-bleached wreckage grinning through the wrack  
 And turned cornelian the flashing eyeball.  
 For here the tide sang like a riding hero  
 Across the rock-waste, and the early sun  
 Was shattered in the teeth of shuttered windows.  
 But now we are the gowned lamenters  
 Who stand among the junipers and ruins.  
 We are the lovers who defied the sea  
 Until the tide returning threw them up  
 A foreign corpse with blue-rimmed eyes, and limbs  
 Drawn limp and racked between the jigging waves.

SIDNEY KEYES

## *Time The Great Stallion*

Time, the great stallion with ears of silk,  
 Swallowed a city with a night-yawn taking,  
 Beggared a barony with new-mown making.  
 And rode to hounds with a cruel homeless wind.  
 And took a towering ethic in its stride.  
 And left an empire lying on its side.  
 And topped and toppled man with a nameless laughter.  
 Smothered the running poet with his song.  
 Blooded two shades debating right and wrong.

Burned fifty forests in a dying kingdom.  
 Quickened a negative with whispered thrust.  
 Left a grey spinster powdery with lust.

Flooded a mine and left a tanker blazing  
 Blinded a god before an earthworm gazing  
 Was found on Monday morning, meek and grazing.

JOHN SINGER

### *For an Anniversary*

To you who at my side with sweet water  
 Always have stood in the summer,  
 And in the bitter solstice and the storm  
 With breast and kiss have kept me warm,  
 I give the permanent element,  
 The poem in the acknowledgment.

To you whom penury nor the crucial word  
 For which I barter bed and board,  
 Could ever divide as, at my side,  
 You stood in humility and pride,  
 To you I render what is little enough  
 Of prizes but I give all my love.

And for the losses, the tears, the errors,  
 The holidays I took in mirrors,  
 The snowball debts of the denials  
 You pile upon me, for these I also,  
 Seeking with words somehow to defray  
 Acknowledge it is impossible ever to pay.

GEORGE BARKER

### *The Possible*

Comrade heart, if ever you should be tempted,  
 Looking on the white and cheated faces  
 That pour from cinemas, the slackness of bodies  
 Endlessly acquiescent, walking the streets,

If ever you should be tempted, comrade heart,  
 By your own smallness, by our own longing  
 For quiet rivers, maternal hills  
 And the solitary sun along the wrinkled sea,

If you should be drawn into the tragic dream  
 Of histrionic ruin, and begin to betray  
 The force of your ancestors unfolding  
 Their fearlessness like buds within your blood.

If you should be tempted to despair, remember,  
 Remember at once, and be humbled and quickened,  
 That already the lands live, where men  
 Spread forth their life like an ordered and opening flower,

Where the factories and the growing machines  
 Compact as coral, no longer devour their flesh and time,  
 But like an enlargement of the general mind  
 Project the pattern of its will.

There all we fight for, is already growing.  
 They are sowing the fallow we have not yet broken.  
 Their pleasures are not hectic and yearning and unreal,  
 But vigorous as an accompanying wind, and universal and overflowing.

So what your inner energy dreams is possible too,  
 The power creating both dream and act.

But you

Only by despair delay its trenchant action,  
 Only by saying 'impossible' make it so.

RANDALL SWINGLER

## *The Quick and the Dead*

What shall it profit you and me  
 To learn the sun's candlepower  
 Or the speed of light? What are scientists  
 But human fools when lightning slays a tree  
 And lays it at their yokel feet, O where  
 Is the sun's beat in their cold-fingered look?

In frigid observatories astronomers  
 Set down the stars and docket every comet  
 In a book. This spidery symbol  
 On the fly-walked page is Venus  
 Caught to earth and laid by a clerk's hand  
 On this white sheet, colder than death.

Science has shown me like Mephistopheles  
 To Faust, pleasures which turn to dust  
 It has shown me a robot's world.  
 Along its railroad of reason I have found  
 The lust in the dark, the lost hunger  
 And the ineffective visions of the blind.

While magicians hide the secret of beauty  
 In a mathematical tag, our hearts  
 Like wounded birds, failing and falling  
 Drop to a slow death. Let us find  
 Our own sun with the naked eye  
 And spend life's hour on his golden sands.

Let us give Venus up to eternity  
 That we may know those visions in the sky  
 As sea knows moon, untutored  
 And unquestioning, thus to touch time again  
 Through a thousand purgatorial years  
 And spin our five senses into the web of stars.

MARK HOLLOWAY

## *Death at Teatime*

That afternoon  
 when everything stopped at four o'clock  
 the houses suddenly looked old as fossils  
 cold in the rigid sunlight transfixed from prehistoric time.

Sound  
 raved up in spate from College Green,  
 released from utterance  
 for there was now no more to be said:  
 released from laughter  
 for there would be no more quips.

Faces were floating

blind façades shuttered upon nothingness,  
sense and spirit having slipped apart for ever;  
and the dreaming trams went reeling by me  
fleeing to their last termini,  
for now there would be no going and returning,  
no returning at evening with flowers from the mountains,  
for all the ragged streamers of roads from Dublin  
were blowing out upon a wind of death  
to nowhere.

But the cyclists in College Green kept up their mesmeric cycling  
moved by a tic of to and fro called living.

And through all that heaving, maggot-seething  
superfluous spume of a city,  
young women in telephone booths were ringing up their lovers  
not knowing that from four o'clock that afternoon  
love had been discontinued.

K. ARNOLD PRICE

### *Psyche*

The moon fills up its hollow bowl of milk,  
bodies grow blue like pebbles in a stream  
and light falls like a wind in summer stripping  
girls into marble, showing their round limbs  
moving but frozen, under the watery cloth:  
tonight I watch her mask move into sleep  
her breathing like a bee on a wood's floor  
coming and going, to and from the light.

She is my field, and in her furrows run  
my ways like rain, and the crops of her shadows  
are pools, are a wild sea—and she has mountains  
stranger than feathers, hard as fishes. There  
fall in her hollows shadows of orchard trees  
that follow the moon's circle like a tide  
grassy nets that move on the dropped apples.

Body, white continent  
on all whose beaches break the seas of years  
this is the surf they say the dying hear.

We both are islands, and our grassy edge  
creeps inwards, like the healing of a wound.  
And the windy light is time, a limitless water,  
a white sea lying restless as a hand

where no rock rests the gull, and no tree stands  
ever, forever—moving, lifeless, alone.

ALEX COMFORT

## *Crowd of Birds and Children*

Beginning to be very still  
I know the country puffed green through the glens.  
I see the tree's folly appleing into angels  
Dress up the sun as my brother  
And climb slow branches and religious miracles.  
On the deck of the doved woods  
Upward unhappy and holy breaks voice of the crowd  
That has in my body built shape and its enemy.  
Through each harmonic orchard onewhere bloody  
With all that my choice chooses in Genesis  
The overhead rooks laugh up in a dark borough  
With fury making fear to the daybreaking mavis.

Never shudder this day that grins  
For fear has saved so many set for climbing  
To fear of quenching their own in their each vein's wilderness.  
The too-late lovely anger of danger  
Begins in my slang gland of drunken areas  
Fenced in the cunning legend of the fruit.  
The young of the climbing behind their lyrical mother  
High over split stones plagued with a tongue of feet  
Over cobbles and horse and man says the milking bleeder  
Pass each ever sowing a starved handful of bread  
On the crowd where the rut and the creaking pin go through  
With the carted meat of stories and a whipping youngster.

Flashed over roads said the baillie  
Broke price with wrinkles with the grace of beggars  
Under the mallet in dizzy townclock squares.

And the monster was rainy with stars  
 Each watchlight fisherman-tied in the cattlesteep dusk  
 And a sunk sea noise in the roosting forest house.  
 Every flying thing the sky gives to a child  
 To feed his wild crowd and to share his deed,  
 How the wind can wear him town and village through  
 And sort out wallspikes round the baiting worm.  
 And resting and rising, he, whose brow is bed  
 For angels, traces the apples burned in a storm.

Each child is the spit of the parable.  
 Each child on the trot in the street of choruses  
 With the eye of the pinning thistle through his hand  
 Walks on the watercourse of roads  
 Down hillocks burly with all time squeezed in a wound.  
 I am the passenger on cords  
 Stretched over millions, each to the ceiling a vision  
 Of sprouting country faces tied on sky.  
 From my hand's prize the climbing crumbs of words  
 Engendered in torrents, jagged with a pouring thorn  
 Ferry the cut straws twisted into birds.

W. S. GRAHAM

### *Living without her love*

Living without her love is slowly dying  
 and, drafted for death, to go exile from hope for ever;  
 under amazing dawns to be ignorant like dog of glory  
 whose vision knows only  
 monotonous greys of cheap street photographs.

Who, without hope to hope, stand at this station  
 watching from death the passing passengers,  
 the dear welcomes and strained eyes of those who wait,  
 I see now the years extend before me  
 like journeys through rock  
 and bitter oblivious deserts  
 whose dust destroys the last hideous shreds of vision  
 and the eternal buzzards wheel to steal my eyes.

Yet I pray Time and this strict journey  
 on which I new embark  
 will burn me like flame to purge this desperate weakness  
 —infection of a dying world  
 paralysing the will—  
 returning me to life and oh!  
 returning me slowly  
 beside her side and to  
 the essential April of her love.

RICHARD GOODMAN

## *Llanto for Federico Garcia Lorca*

on the Sixth Anniversary of his Execution in September, 1936

In Granada, in Granada  
 They dumbed the mou o a makar,  
 In Granada, in Granada  
 They murthered Garcia Lorca.

Ye bard o the tinks, o gipsy Spain,  
 Frae Granada, frae Granada,  
 As the gangrel folk that scorn chains—  
 O wae fur Garcia Lorca!

At dawn agin a sun-white waa  
 In Granada, in Granada,  
 The rifles reik, O see him faa,  
 Daith rins at the tyrant's order.

But they shall pey for that they did  
 In Granada, in Granada—  
 Franco and his men o bluid,  
 Their hauns are reid wi murder.

Mair nor jist ane enemie  
 Was killt yon morn in Granada.  
 For daith is neer a boundarie  
 Tae the voice o a folk was Lorca.

Ay, he was Spain, anither Burns  
In Granada, in Granada—  
O wae fur thae when the tide turns  
That strak doun Garcia Lorca!

And wae fur thae in ilka land  
Or Galloway, or Granada,  
Hae dung the libertie o man—  
For bards than daith are stranger.

And aye their leid is Freedom  
In Galloway or Granada,  
O greit fur the tinkler's martyrdom  
An the dumb deid mou o a makar.

Ay, greit for Lorca, bard or waifs  
Saw birth an daith in Granada,  
Wae fur the sang was stanch'd yon day  
While the sand rins reid wi clanger.

But sing o the victorie was gained  
In Granada, in Granada—  
For aye yir bluid shall dirl throu Spain,  
Federico Garcia Lorca!

SYDNEY GOODSIR SMITH

## *Ballad*

Far in the night whan faint the mune  
My love knocked at the door:  
He spak nae word as he walkit in,  
And wi' nae sound stepp't owre.

White was his face in the thin licht,  
And white his hands and feet:  
Like snaw, that in itself is bricht,  
White was his windin'-sheet.

He looked on me wi' sichtless e'en,  
And yet his e'en were kind:  
And a' the joys that we had taen  
Thrang'd up into my mind.

And for the whilie he was near,  
 Glimmerin' in the gloom,  
 I thocht the hale o' the world was there  
 Sae sma' in a sma' room.

WILLIAM SOUTAR

## *The Glass of Pure Water*

'In the de-oxidisation and re-oxidisation of hydrogen in a single drop of water we have before us, truly, so far as force is concerned, an epitome of the whole life.... The burning of coal to move an iron wheel differs only in detail, and not in essence, from the decomposition of a muscle to effect its own concentration.'

—JAMES HINTON

'We must remember that his analysis was done not intellectually, but by an immediate process of intuition; that he was able, as it were, to taste the hydrogen and oxygen in his glass of water.'

—ALDOUS HUXLEY (of D. H. Lawrence)

'Praise of pure water is common in Gaelic poetry.'

—W. J. WATSON: *Bardachd Ghaidhlig*

Hold a glass of pure water to the eye of the sun!  
 It is difficult to tell the one from the other  
 Save by the tiny hardly visible trembling of the water.  
 This is the nearest analogy to the essence of human life  
 Which is even more difficult to see.  
 Dismiss anything you can see more easily;  
 It is not alive—it is not worth seeing.  
 There is a minute indescribable difference  
 Between one glass of pure water and another  
 With slightly different chemical constituents.  
 The difference between one human life and another  
 Is no greater; colour does not colour the water:  
 You cannot tell a white man's life from a black man's.  
 But the lives of these particular slum people  
 I am chiefly concerned with, like the lives of all  
 The world's poorest, remind me less  
 Of a glass of water held between my eyes and the sun  
 —They remind me of the feeling they had  
 Who saw Sacco and Vanzetti in the death cell

On the eve of their execution.

—One is talking to God.

I dreamt last night that I saw one of His angels  
Making his centennial report to the Recording Angel  
On the condition of human life.

Look at the ridge of skin between your thumb and forefinger.

Look at the delicate lines on it and how they change

—How many different things they can express—

As you move out or close in your forefinger and thumb.

And look at the changing shapes—the countless

Little gestures, little miracles of line—

Of your forefinger and thumb as you move them.

And remember how much a hand can express,

How a slight movement of it can say more

Than millions of words—dropped hand, clenched fist,

Snapping fingers, thumb up, thumb down,

Raised in blessing, clutched in passion, begging,

Welcome, dismissal, prayer, applause,

And a million other signs, too slight, too subtle,

Too packed with meaning for words to describe,

A universal language understood by all.

And the Angel's report on human life

Was the subtlest movement—just like that—and no more;

A hundred years of life on the Earth

Summed up, not a detail missed or wrongly assessed,

In that little inconceivably intricate movement.

The only communication between man and man

That says anything worth hearing

—The hidden well-water; the finger of destiny—

Moves as that water, that angel, moved.

Truth is the rarest thing and life

The gentlest, most unobtrusive movement in the world.

I cannot speak to you of the poor people of all the world

But among the people in these nearest slums I know

This infinitesimal twinkling, this delicate play

Of tiny signs that not only say more

Than all speech, but all there is to say,

All there is to say and to know and to be.

There alone I seldom find anything else,

Each in himself or herself a dramatic whole,

An 'agon' whose validity is timeless.

Our duty is to free that water, to make these gestures,  
 To help humanity to shed all else,  
 All that stands between any life and the sun,  
 The quintessence of any life and the sun;  
 To still all sound save that talking to God;  
 To end all movements save movements like these.  
 India had that great opportunity centuries ago  
 And India lost it—and became a vast morass,  
 Where no water wins free; a monstrous jungle  
 Of useless movement; a babel  
 Of stupid voices, drowning the still small voice.  
 It is our turn now; the call is to the Celt.

This little country can overcome the whole world of wrong  
 As the Lacadaemonians the armies of Persia.  
 Cornwall—Gaeldom—must stand for the ending  
 Of the essential immorality of any man controlling  
 Any other—for the ending of all Government  
 Since all Government is a monopoly of violence;  
 For the striking of this water out of the rock of Capitalism;  
 For the complete emergence from the pollution and fog  
 With which the hellish interests of private property  
 In land, machinery, and credit  
 Have corrupted and concealed from the sun,  
 From the gestures of truth, from the voice of God,  
 Hundreds upon hundreds of millions of men,  
 Denied the life and liberty to which they were born  
 And fobbed off with a horrible travesty instead  
 —Self righteous, sunk in the belief that they are human,  
 When not a tenth of one per cent show a single gleam  
 Of the life that is in them under their accretions of filth.

And until that day comes every true man's place  
 Is to reject all else and be with the lowest  
 The poorest—in the bottom of that deepest of wells  
 In which alone is truth; in which  
 Is truth only—truth that should shine like the sun,  
 With a monopoly of movement, and a sound like talking to God. . . .

HUGH MACDIARMID

## *Colour Bar*

(*Lines for a Well-appointed Lounge*)

O dead men were yellow, and dead men were Red,  
 Dead men were black men who couldn't find bread,  
 And here stand the living, well-dressed and well-fed.  
 The living are white men, occasionally tight men—  
 But always the right men to have and to hold  
 All the world's factories, all the world's gold.  
 Unblackened by labour, unreddened by blood,  
 Their white hands have hastened to nip every bud  
 That might flower into plenty for poor men, and all men,  
 For only the white men—and not all the white men,  
 But only the right men, the happy and few men,  
 May have and may hold. Yet what if the future,  
 That uncertain creature, should alter their colour,  
 Should grieve them, should leave them black and blue men,  
 Or, cashless and fleshless, to depend for their whiteness,  
 On the pie and the vulture, the sun and the sand?

DONALD BISHOP

## *The Memory of Yeats*

O mirror which time unsilvers now, now  
 That the clocks stop, ormulu or gilt glassy Victorian  
 Between black ferns, now that the Parthenon  
 Shudders and disintegrates into secular dust,  
 And all the libraries of the great are fallen,  
 And one last acid wave  
 Washes and scoops mind's cave and leaves it to oblivion;

O sea-wrecked, lost before the wax of the Purification  
 With the wild voices off the slushy street,  
 With the gas lit in the office afternoon,  
 Hissing hatred from a faulty mantle  
 Like a fish garrotted in air;  
 O heart's confessional, buried in a bitter winter  
 Before crocus or snowdrop

When water of war crept higher,  
 The tears to flow in many a prefecture  
 From submarine cisterns of loss and revenge;  
 You, who were taken from us before the snow,  
 How will it be with us now?

'A bas les aristos!' but who now will scratch  
 The eyes of the hateful Bethel, babbling texts,  
 Or assault the backside of the Saxon ruin  
 Waving its cheque-book by St. George's Channel,  
 Or sorrow again as when the Irish made  
 Their Easter duty of rebellion?  
 Never a bomb in railway waiting-room  
 Shall speak as you spoke from a round tower  
 Of pride and minsterisy. The regalia of power  
 Are buried centuries deep, and dead the throaty music of the swan:  
 You have emigrated like all Irishmen.

For the voice modulating through seven heavens, more potent than  
 poteen,  
 Prince of bushido reared where the staple potato  
 Furnishes the illicit still with political magic  
 And the cotton-plant and bog-auricula  
 Weep on moss under the coasting buzzard;  
 Where the platonic weapon of the blackthorn shillelagh  
 Stammers its Erse among cromlechs and Celtic crosses  
 With snake-charming Patrick and a hundred masses

Per diem for the souls in purgatory—  
 He will not return this anniversary.  
 He will not return this anniversary  
 Though Shannon light a hundred thousand lamps  
 Burning a broque of gaiety and heart-lore  
 While seminaries fondle the syllogism  
 In their crepuscular Holy Ghostliness  
 (Darii, Celarent, Ferio and Barbara);  
 Though Ulster like an amputated limb  
 In its north of flax and shipyards bickers to enlistment,  
 In its baffled basalt and steam-hammers' clangour:  
 For The Harp That Once will not sound any more.

O western non-pareil, grieve not to be  
 Never to grieve again, never to hear  
 The owls of midnight in the hazel-wood,

Or see first smoke rising from a waking city  
 In summer when the amazing fuchsia  
 Is resonant yet with the topheavy bee;  
 For you belong to the freemasonry  
 Of the rising peat-drenched wind and robber sea  
 Of winter. No more have you to fear  
 The minatory tongue of the mad partisan  
 Or howling schoolroom recitation.  
 You are enfranchised of destroying pity;  
 You are elect to linger here  
 As man and myth  
 As long as our intemperate literature.

KENNETH ALLOTT

## *On a Late Victorian Water Colour at Oxford*

Shines, billowing cold and gold from Cumnor Hurst,  
 A winter sunset on wet cobbles, where  
 By Canterbury Gate the fishtails flare.  
 Someone in Corpus, reading for a first,  
 Pulls down red blinds and flounders on, immers'd  
 In Hegel, heedless of the yellow glare  
 On porch and pinnacle and window-square,  
 The brown stone crumbling where the showers have burst.

A late, last luncheon staggers out of Peck  
 And hires a hansom: from half-flooded grass  
 Returning athletes bark at what they see.  
 But we will mount the horse-tram's upper deck  
 And wave salute to Buols', as we pass  
 Bound for the Banbury Road in time for tea.

JOHN BETJEMAN

## *The Intelligentsia*

ARTHUR KOESTLER

'Intelligentsia' is one of those terms difficult to define, but easy to associate. It is logically blurred but emotionally vivid, surrounded with a halo, or rather several halos which overlap and vary according to period and place. One may list as examples the romantic salon; the professional middle classes; terroristic organisations of students and aristocracy in the second half of nineteenth-century Russia; patriotic University Corps in post-Napoleonic Germany; the Bohemians of Montmartre, and so on. There are also evocative geographical names like Bloomsbury, Montparnasse, and Cagnes; and certain typical attitudes to life including clothing, hair-fashion, drink and food. The aura of the intelligentsia changes all the time; its temporary representatives are subdivided into classes and groups, and even its limits are blurred by a host of camp followers and hangers-on: members of the aristocracy, mæcenases, tarts, tools, admirers and Ernest Young Men. Hence we won't get far with impressionistic judgments, and had better look up the *Oxford dictionary* for a solid definition.

There we find:

'Intelligentia, -sia, The part of a nation (esp. the Russian) that aspires to independent thinking.'

Thus the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 3rd edition, 1934.

By 1936, in the climate of the pink decade and the popular front, the definition has undergone a significant change:

'The class consisting of the educated portion of the population regarded as capable of forming public opinion.' (*The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, 2nd edition, 1936.)

This second version has since obviously been proved too optimistic and we had better fall back on the first which is excellent. Historically, it is indeed the 'aspiration to independent thinking' which provides the only valid group-characteristic of the intelligentsia.

But how does it happen that an 'aspiration towards independent thinking' arises in a part of a nation? In our class-ridden world this is obviously not a matter of a spontaneous association of the gifted—enlightened dukes, plus miners' sons plus General Practitioners. The intelligentsia of a given period and place is of a fairly homogeneous social texture: loose threads only appear on the fringes. Intelligence

alone is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition to become a member of the Intelligentsia. Instead, we have to regard the formation of this particular group as a social process which, as far as modern society is concerned, begins with the French Revolution.

## II

## THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE THIRD ESTATE

Among the upper strata of the Third Estate the aspiration to independent thinking was not a luxury but a dire necessity of survival. The young bourgeoisie, hemmed in by the stultifying feudal structure had to conquer its historic *lebensraum*, and this conquest was only possible by blowing up the feudal totems and taboos with the dynamite of 'independent thought'. The first modern intellectuals were the Encyclopædists, and they enter the historical stage as the great debunkers and iconoclasts. Goethe resurrected is unimaginable in our time, but Voltaire would be within a fortnight acclimatised in Bloomsbury, winning all weekend competitions of the *New Statesman*. For Goethe was the last Renaissance genius, a direct descendant of Leonardo, and his attitude to Society that of a courtier of some enlightened Florentine prince; whereas with Voltaire, the great debunking of feudal values begins.

The intelligentsia in the modern sense thus first appears as that part of a nation which by its social situation not so much 'aspires' but is *driven to* independent thought, that is to a type of group behaviour which debunks the existing hierarchy of values (from which it is excluded) and at the same time tries to replace it with new values of its own. This constructive tendency of the intelligentsia is its second basic feature. The true iconoclasts always had a prophetic streak, and all debunkers have a bashfully hidden pedagogic vein.

But where had these new values of their own come from? This is the point where Marxist analysis ends in over-simplified schemata:

'The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part... Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind, ...'

And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature.'

*(Manifesto of the Communist Party. 1848.)*

The first paragraph quoted shows Marx and Engels at their best; in the second they take the fatal short cut from Economy to 'Superstructure': that is culture, art, mass psychology. Marxian society has a basement—production, and an attic—intellectual production; the staircase and the lifts are missing.

For it is not as simple as that: the triumphant class creating its own philosophic superstructure to fit its mode of production like a tailored suit. The Encyclopædia was not commissioned by the National Assembly. Whenever a class or group emerged victorious from its struggles, it found the befitting ideology already waiting for it like a ready made suit in a department store. Thus Marx found Hegel, Feuerbach, and Ricardo, Mussolini had only to pick Sorel and Pareto, Hitler discovered Gobineau, Houston Stuart Chamberlain and Jung; Stalin revived Machiavelli and Peter the Great. This, of course, is a mixed bag of examples of progressive and regressive movements which, strictly speaking, should be kept apart. For regressive movements need simply to fall back on superannuated values—not on the last, but on the last-but-one or last-but-two, to perform a romantic revival, and derive a lot of pseudo-revolutionary gusto out of this 'revolution à rebours'. And there is always a part of the intelligentsia which, abandoning its aspiration to independent thought and detaching itself from the main body, lends itself to such romantic revivals. They are the tired and the cynics, the hedonists, the romantic capitulators, who transform their dynamite into Bengal lights, the Juengers, Montherlants, Ezra Pounds.

Discarding these, there still remains the problem of how and why the true, emergent, progressive movements in history, those which led to the Rights of Man and to the founding of the First Workers International, those who have no last-but-one precepts to fall back on, invariably find the right ideology waiting for them at the right moment. I repeat that I do not believe any more that the economic process by itself creates its own superstructure. Orthodox Marxism has never produced the historical evidence for this postulate. Nor, of course, is it a matter of coincidence. It seems rather that political economy and cultural development are merely two aspects of the same basic process, which we are as yet far from being able to define.

Two examples from other spheres may help to bring this vague sounding assertion into relief. The first is the old mind-body problem where the antithesis between materialistic and idealistic schools was much the same as between historical materialism and historical idealism, until the double-aspect theory brought the quarrel about which is the cause and which the effect, which is the hen and which the egg, to an at least temporary close. Thus your gastric acid is neither the cause nor the effect of your nervous state, but both are aspects, consequences of your total mode of living. The second example is the relation between physics and mathematics. When Einstein was faced with the contradictory evidence of two perfectly sound physical experiments (Michelson-Morley and Fizeau) he was able to develop the theory of Relativity only because the apparently abstract and useless non-Euclidian mathematical fantasies of Bolyai, Riemann and others were waiting for him just at the right moment, ready-made around the corner. The mathematical and the physical elements of Relativity were developed quite independently, and their coincidence would appear miraculous, without the recognition of a fundamental trend of evolution in scientific thought, of which the various faculties are merely isolated aspects.

The rise of the Third Estate and of the progressive middle classes was thus neither the cause nor the effect of humanistic liberal philosophy. The two phenomena sprang from the same root, they were entwined and correlated like colour and shape in the same object. *The basic function of the Encyclopædist and of all later intelligentsias was this correlating of social and intellectual evolution; they were the self-interpretating, introspective organs of the social body;* and this function automatically includes both the iconoclastic and the pedagogic, the destructive and the constructive element.

### III

#### THE DECAY OF THE THIRD ESTATE

This function gives a clue to the always peculiar structure of the intelligentsia.

Social behaviour has a much greater inertia than thought. There is always an enormous discrepancy between our collective ways of living and the accumulated data of science, art, technique. We wage wars, go to church, worship kings, eat murderous diets, conform to sexual taboos, make neurotics of our children, miseries of our marriages, oppress and let ourselves be oppressed—whereas in our text books and

art galleries there is embodied the objective knowledge of a way of living which we shall only put into practice in decades or centuries. In everyday life we all behave like creatures in a period piece, anachronistic caricatures of ourselves. The distance between the library and the bedroom is astronomical. However, the body of theoretical knowledge and independent thought is there, only waiting to be picked up, as the Jacobins picked up the Encyclopædists.

This picking up, however, is the function of a special type of people; the liaison agents between the way we live and the way we *could* live according to the contemporary level of objective knowledge. Those who are snugly tucked into the social hierarchy have obviously no strong impulse towards independent thought. Where should it come from? They have no reason to destroy their accepted values nor any desires to build new ones. The thirst for knowledge is mainly confined to situations where the unknown is disquieting; the happy are rarely curious. On the other hand the great majority of the oppressed, the underdogs, lack the opportunity or the objectivity or both, for the pursuit of independent thought. They accept or reject the existing values; both attitudes are inarticulate and unobjective. Thus the function of co-ordination between the two concepts *Homo* and *Sapiens* falls to those sandwiched in between two layers, and exposed to the pressure of both. The intelligentsia is a kind of sensitive, porous membrane stretched between media of different properties.

One should not however confound them with the middle classes as such. Sensitivity, searching and groping are attitudes which presuppose a certain amount of frustration—not too much and not too little; a kind of moderate unhappiness, a harmonious disequilibrium. The upper strata which accept the traditional values, lack this frustration; the bottom strata have too much of it—to the degree of being either paralysed or discharging it in convulsive fits. Further, it must be a *specific* frustration—the discontent of the professional man, writer, artist, who rebel not because society has deprived them of every chance, crushed and buried them in pit or workshop, but because they have been given a margin large enough to develop their gifts, but too narrow to make them feel smug and accept the given order of things. For the smug, thinking is a luxury, for the frustrated a necessity. And as long as the chasm between thought and tradition, theoretical insight and practical routine prevails, thinking must necessarily be directed by the two poles of debunking and Utopianism.

All this does not apply any more to the bulk of the middle class. It did as long as their climate was ‘Commonwealth’ and Jacobinism. Meanwhile the once revolutionary urban bourgeoisie has become a

conservative force. No more a sensitive membrane, but an inert sticky glue which holds the social body together. Their frustrations are repressed, their aspirations are not towards new hierarchies of values, but towards climbing to the top of the existing hierarchy. Thus the intelligentsia, once the vanguard of the ascending bourgeoisie, becomes the Lumpen-Bourgeoisie in the age of its decay.

## IV

### THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE FOURTH ESTATE

As the Third Estate gradually loses its progressive character to become first stagnant then regressive, the intelligentsia becomes more and more detached from it and driven to the quest for more vigorous allies, capable of fulfilling its task of demolition and construction.

The most fascinating example for this quest is nineteenth-century Russia, '... Whether they (the revolutionary intelligentsia) spoke of the necessity of political liberty, of the plight of the peasant or of the socialist future of society, it was always their own plight which really moved them. And their plight was not primarily due to material need: it was spiritual.' (Borkenau, *The Communist International*.)

This spiritual plight of the Russian intelligentsia was yet another form of duality I mentioned: the contradiction between the inert, stagnant, habit-conditioned form of everyday life on the one hand, and the accumulated data of objective knowledge lying fallow as 'theory' and 'ideology' on the other. For the nineteenth-century Russians this latter principle was embodied in Western European civilisation: in British Parliamentarism, French literature, German philosophy. For them, the Westerner was the incarnation of homo sapiens as opposed to the Barbarians of the steppes; just as, by an ironical turn of history, the Western intelligentsia of the two post-war decades became spell-bound by Russian Communism which seemed to incorporate the truly human Utopia, as opposed to the decay of Capitalism.

There is, however, a fundamental difference between the early Russian revolutionary intelligentsia—the Shelyabows, Sonja Petrovskajas, Bakunins, Nechaews, Kropotkins, and the Bloomsbury of the Pink Decade. It is easy to sneer at the comparison and to contrast the futility of the latter with the heroism of the assassins of Alexander II, the martyrdom of the Siberian exiles and the prisoners of Schluesselburg. Racial comparisons between the undeniably greater endurance and fatalism of the semi-asiatic Russians and the highly strung Westerners provide one differential factor, but not the basic one. The basic

point is that people grow under the burden of their responsibilities and shrink if the burden is taken from them. Nechaew lived for a number of years chained to the wall of a humid cell and when his comrades succeeded in establishing contact and offered to liberate him, refused because he preferred them to concentrate on more important tasks. But later, in the emigré atmosphere of Geneva, he became involved in the most squalid quarrels and died an obscure nobody. The venerable and justly venerated Russian student heroines and martyrs were not less hysterical than any character of Huxley's or Evelyn Waugh's; Lassalle was a snob who got himself killed in a quixotic duel, Marx a pathologically quarrelsome old sponger, Bakunin had in incestuous fixation to a sister, was impotent and died a virgin; Trotsky at a certain period spent all his afternoons and evenings playing chess in the *Café Central* in Vienna—a typical figure from an Osbert Lancaster *Café Royal Landscape*; Lenin suffered a traumatic shock when his brother Alexander was hanged—hence his fanatical hatred of the Bourgeoisie of which, in analytical terms, the Russian revolution was merely a 'projection'. Neurosis is inherent in the structure of intelligentsias (I shall come back to this point in a moment): history, however, is not interested in a person's motives, only in his achievements. But why is it that the burden and bliss of responsibility is given to the intelligentsia in certain periods and in others not, condemning the latter to barrenness and futility. This is the question to which the comparison between the early Russians and Bloomsbury boils down; more precisely to the question of the historical constellation which accounts for the sharing-out of responsibilities.

The answer becomes at once obvious by a comparison of the two countries' sociological structure. Nineteenth-century Russia had no Trade Unions, no Labour movement or Co-operatives. Serfdom was only abolished in 1862; in that drowsy, inert giant-country there was no gradual transition from patriarchal feudalism to modern Capitalism; I have spoken to peasants who took aeroplanes for granted, watching them each day fly over their heads but had never seen a railway or motor-car; others who had travelled in a car but wouldn't believe that such a thing as a bicycle existed.

What a paradise for intellectuals with pedagogical yearnings! When the first of them, the martyrs of Narodnaya Volya, started what they called 'going among the people' dressed as peasants, preaching the new gospel, they trod on virgin soil, they found no competition in the shape of Trade Unions and Labour politicians, telling them to cast off their masquerade and go back to the Bloomsbury of Petrograd or Moscow. The mushik proved apathetic and did not respond to their appeal; but the crusading intelligentsia was not discouraged because

they had no rivals; they changed their tactics from mass-appeal to terrorism, from terrorism to work among the industrial proletariat, the landless peasants, among the soldiers. They quarrelled, they split, they ramified; but all the time they could work in the untouched raw material of History, could project their spiritual plight, their desire to destroy and rebuild on to a gigantic historical plane. Their faith moved rocks because there still were unhewn rocks to move.

In contrast to them, the Western intelligentsia found no virgin fields to plough, no natural allies to realise their aspirations to independent thought. According to Marxist theory the intelligentsia was to join the ranks of the working class and to become their strategists and tacticians. There is no evidence that the intelligentsia lacked the courage or the ability to do so. In 1848 students and workers fought together on the barricades; in the French Commune and in the revolutionary movements after the last war in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and even in the International Brigades of Spain, they gave an excellent account of themselves. But from the middle of the nineteenth century onward, the workers of Central and Western Europe had rapidly developed their own organisations, parties, trade unions, produced their own leaders and, above all, their own bureaucracy—men with iron wills and wooden heads. In an age of accelerated developments, the organised Fourth Estate had become stagnant much quicker than the Third in its time, and without even ascending to power. The crumbs of material improvements and the shadow of political influence which various Sections of the Second International had wrung from the rulers, were enough to paralyse their impetus. Members of the Western Intelligentsia could become Labour members of Parliaments, editors of Left papers, lecturers in dreary evening classes; but there were no rocks to move with the lever of ‘independent thought’. Towards the end of the century the Western intelligentsia had only the choice to be either bourgeois decadents or proletarian schoolmasters. Their groups and cliques developed according to these alternative poles, with a spectrum ranging from the French Symbolists through the ‘George-Kreis’ to the Fabians. Compare Shaw with Voltaire, Leon Blum with St. Just, and you get the difference—not so much in stature as in historical opportunity.

The shape-up of the first world war seemed to create a new opportunity for a general debunking and re-building. The whole body of ideas had undergone a radical transformation: Relativity and Quantum mechanics, Hormonology and Psycho-analysis, Leninism and Behaviourism, Aviation and Wireless, Expressionism and Surrealism—a completely new universe had taken shape in the library; and the

dazzling light it radiated drove the intelligentsia half crazy by its contrast to the anachronistic, dusty-musty traditions still governing everyday conduct and beliefs. What a historical opportunity for debunking and rebuilding; but where were the allies to carry it out? The sensitive membrane vibrated wildly; but there was no resonance: body attached to it. Utopian striving during those two decades was monopolised by the Third International, whose blue-print for the European revolution was shaped on the conditions of a country with eighty per cent illiterates and a ratio of rural to urban population of ten to one. During the two decades of its existence the revolutionary movement was focused on and governed by that semi-asiatic dictatorship. Its European extension needed not intellectuals, but a ruthless and uncritically obedient bureaucracy. The few members of the Western intelligentsia who were accepted into its ranks lost first the right, and soon even the desire for 'independent thought'; they became fanatic sectarians and Party-hacks, while the best among them met a tragic end. Particularly tragic was the fate of the revolutionary intelligentsia in the country where revolution seemed almost within reach, Germany. Liebknecht and Luxembourg were murdered in '18, Paul Levy committed suicide after his expulsion from the C.P., Ruth Fischer, also expelled, vanished into obscurity, Toller hanged himself in New York, Muehsam committed suicide in a Nazi concentration camp, Max Hoelz was drowned under dubious circumstances in Russia, Heinz Neumann, the last surviving C.P. leader who came from the intelligentsia was liquidated.

But the bulk of the Western intelligentsia were never admitted to this bloody Olympus. They were not wanted, had to remain fellow-travellers, the fifth wheel to the cart. The intelligentsia of the Pink Decade was irresponsible, because it was deprived of the privilege of responsibility. Left in the cold, suspended in a vacuum, they became decadents of the revolution just as their predecessors had become decadents of the bourgeoisie. It was nobody's fault; for they were the mirror, not the light.

I am neither trying to whitewash, nor to accuse. The intelligentsia is part of the social body, its most sensitive part; when the body is ill, the skin develops a rash. The deterioration of the intelligentsia is as much a symptom of disease as the corruption of the ruling class or the sleeping sickness of the proletariat. They are symptoms of the same fundamental process. To sneer at the intelligentsia and, while depriving it of the responsibility of action, shove on to it the responsibility of failure, is either thoughtless stupidity or a manœuvre with obvious motives. Nazism knew exactly what it was doing when it exterminated the intelligentsia of the European Continent.

## V

## THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND NEUROSIS

The sensitive membrane not only stretches between heterogeneous social classes, but between the social body as a whole and its environment. It is tempting, and perhaps not entirely futile, to follow up this metaphor for a while. It is the surface, the ectoderm, phylogenetically the rind of the plasmatic bubble, which provides the tissues for the nerves, the spinal cord and the brain in the embryo. The central nervous system is derived not, as one would expect, from the inside, the sheltered parts, the core; but from the exposed surface, permanently submitted to the bombardment of external stimuli, to irritation and excitement, some lust and much pain. Under the influence of this permanent buzzing shower-bath of stimuli the surface-tissue gradually loses its obtuseness and undergoes that strange transformation, that 'burning-through' process which finally gives rise to the elusive, first faint glow of consciousness. The grey matter of the brain-rind was originally skin-tissue, exposed and brow-beaten, transformed by a unique organic metamorphosis. Even Freud, that giant of profanity, became almost lyrical where (*in Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) he dealt with this aspect of the biology of the mind.

However, man developed a skull, in which his precious grey matter is safely packed like caviar in a box. No such casing is provided by society for its nervous tissues. They are rather treated like corns on the toes, a nuisance permanently trampled on and permanently hitting back with mean little stabs.

To return from metaphor to fact: the relation between intelligentsia and neurosis is not accidental, but functional. To think and behave independently puts one automatically into opposition against the majority whose thinking and behaviour is dependent on traditional patterns: and to belong to a minority is in itself a neurosis-forming situation. From the nonconformist to the crank there is only one step; and the hostile pressure of society provides the push.

When a man in a concert hall coughs, everybody will cough, and one feels the physical itching in one's throat. Group-mimicry is a real force; to resist it means getting out of tune with one's social environment, creates neurotic tensions and feelings of guilt. One might in theory be a thousand times in the right, and yet feel guilty for butting against the accepted wrong, sanctioned by a tradition whose roots have sprouted in one's own unconscious self. To quarrel with society means to quarrel with its projections in one's self, and produces the classical

neurotic split patterns. Oedipus situation and inferiority complex, timidity and arrogance, over-compensation and introversion are merely descriptive metaphors for deformations which spring from basically the same root. An intelligentsia deprived of the prop of an alliance with an ascending class must turn against itself and develop that hot-house atmosphere, that climate of intellectual masturbation and incest, which characterised it during the last decade.

And it must further develop that morbid attraction for the pseudo-intellectual hangers-on whose primary motive is not the 'aspiration to independent thought' but neurosis pure and simple, and who crowd around the hot-house because the world outside is too cold for them. They infiltrate, and gradually outnumber the legitimate inhabitants, adding to their disrepute, until, in periods of decadence, the camp-followers gradually swallow up the army. It is a sad transformation when social protest dissolves into a social morbidity.

But even for the 'real' intelligentsia, neurosis is an almost inevitable correlate. Take sex for example. On the one hand we know all about the anachronistic nature of our sex-regulating institutions, their thwarting influence and the constant barrage of unhappiness they shower on society. On the other hand, individual experiments of 'free companionship', marriages with mutual freedom, etc. etc. all end in failure; the very term of 'free love' has already an embarrassingly Edwardian taint. Reasonable arrangements in an unreasonable society cannot succeed. The pressure of the environment (both from outside and from inside our conditioned selves) is enormous; under its distorting influence the natural becomes cramped, even in writing. You feel it even in such accomplished craftsmen as D. H. Lawrence and Hemingway. You hear, when the critical situation approaches, the author saying to himself: 'Damn it, it is an act of nature and I am going to put it as easily and naturally as if the two of them were having a meal.' And then you watch him, the author, putting his sleeves up and setting himself to the task; sweat pours down his brow, his eyes pop out of his head, the nib of his pen breaks under the pressure of his desperate efforts to be 'easy and natural about it'. The trouble is, of course, that while he writes, his environment (i.e. the potential readers) have closed in around him; he feels their stare and breathless expectancy, and feels paralysed by it. Hence the cramped dialect of Lady Chatterley's lover and that preposterous rabbit in the bag for which no bell would ever toll, in an otherwise masterly novel.

The pressure of the environment cramps art as it cramps behaviour. One may challenge this environment, but one has to pay for it, and the price is neurotic guilt. There never was an intelligentsia without a

guilt-complex; it is the income tax one has to pay for wanting to make others richer. An armament manufacturer may have a perfectly clean conscience; but I have never met a pacifist without a guilty look in his eyes.

Those who attack the intelligentsia for its neurotic dispositions might as well attack the miners for their susceptibility to T.B. It is a professional disease and should be recognised as such, without scorn or shame.

## VI

### THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND THE FUTURE

The old, liberal and socialist intelligentsia of the Continent is no more; though we still fail to realise how thoroughly Nazism implemented its poet laureate's programme 'When I hear the word culture I fire my pistol'. A new intelligentsia may be growing underground, a new seed beneath the snow; but in spite of newspaper articles, intelligence-digests, radio, etc., we know at present as little about the mental climate of the people beyond the Channel, about how the past, present and future looks, smells, tastes to them, as we know about the planet Mars. Samples of literature which reach us from France do not seem to me very encouraging; but then, I am perhaps prejudiced against what I believe to be the growing French intellectual predilection for melodious bombast. Yet in Italy and the Balkans, in Austria and Norway, a process might already have started which one day will come into the open as a brand-new movement, a fresh attitude to life which will make all of us appear like old Victorian dodderers; and any of us who earn a patronising pat will have got all the credit which historically they deserve.

This is all speculation; it is easier to prophesy in terms of decades than in terms of years. One may have some ideas as to the historical curve along which we move; but the oscillations and ripples of the curve are completely unpredictable. If, in the long run, Burnham's diagnosis comes to be true (as I believe it well may), and if, after some intermediary oscillations, we are in for an era of managerial super-states, the intelligentsia is bound to become a special sector in the Civil Service. This is less far-fetched and fantastic than it sounds; in Russia during the past twenty years this state of affairs has been realised to a very large extent, and Germany during the last ten years was on the way to imitate it. Russian publishing houses, theatres, building trusts, research laboratories, universities and medical services are all owned by the State; the author, actor, architect, scientist, etc., is in fact a civil

servant, though the atmosphere is not exactly that of Whitehall. But even the literary movements in Russia—‘Revolutionary Romanticism’, ‘Socialist Realism’, ‘Operative Literature’, ‘New Patriotism’ have not spontaneously, organically grown, but were decreed at Party-Congresses and by utterances of government spokesmen; and the same applies, in varying degree, to poetry, drama, architecture, films, not to mention historical research and philosophy. The successive philosophical and artistic movements in the Soviet State look as if they were performed to the pattern ‘Left turn—Right turn—As you were’. In the German Reichskultkammern the transformation of Parnassus into a barrack-square was equally thorough.

In the Anglo-Saxon countries a similar development is difficult, but not altogether impossible to visualise. Above all a number of different roads may lead to the same goal. Total mobilisation during the present war was a kind of dress-rehearsal for the Western version of the bureaucratised state, and during the last two years the intelligentsia has to a large extent been absorbed as temporary civil servants in the M. of I., as P.R.O.s, in the B.B.C., etc. For the time being ‘job’ and ‘private production’ are still kept in separate compartments (with the result of the latter becoming more and more atrophied); but it is imaginable that a situation may arise in which the two merge; when, instead of regarding the former as a kind of patriotic hacking and the latter as the real thing, the energies become suddenly canalised into one stream. A few may start the new mode, and the rest follow suit; the individuals concerned may believe that they are following a personal impulse, whereas in reality it would be a process of adaptation to the changed social situation of the managerial state. The danger of this happening is all the greater as conformism is often a form of betrayal which can be carried out with a perfectly clear conscience; and the temptation to exchange the miseries which intellectual honesty entails for the heart-warming satisfactions of managerial efficiency is great. The collapse of the revolutionary movement has put the intelligentsia into a defensive position; the alternative for the next few years is no more ‘capitalism or revolution’ but to save *some* of the values of democracy and humanism or to lose them all; and to prevent this happening one has to cling more than ever to the ragged banner of ‘independent thinking’.

It is not, at present, a very popular banner; and unique in this respect, that on its cloth the spittle of derision has clotted together with the blood of our dead.

# *The Arts in Scotland and Wales*

## 1. SCOTLAND

R. CROMBIE SAUNDERS

Considering the state of the arts in Scotland to-day one is immediately faced with the problem of assessing the work of individual craftsmen who are separated from each other, not only in a geographical sense, which were otherwise unimportant, but also in the sense that they have little or no intercourse as fellow nationals. They are more likely to be influenced by the contemporary work of other countries than by that of each other. They have little chance of maintaining a defence against the overwhelming impact of the work of an individual who is part of a living tradition and who has behind him the strength of a national culture. And yet it would seem to be an historically-justified conclusion that the artist can obtain from and contribute to his compatriots a certain stimulus which is very different from any imported merchandise. This position can only exist, however, when his country does represent for him a critical unit; when it takes sufficient interest in his work voluntarily to judge and assess it rather than to delegate that responsibility to another people. In any other state of affairs (in, for example, the position which obtains in Scotland at present) the artist must indeed be a powerful figure who remains impervious to the direction of critics and theorists who are of an alien tradition and who have noticeably refused to make any real attempt to understand the elaborate traditions which have culminated in his work.

Too often the Scottish artist has succumbed quite unconsciously to the idea that all critical standards have their locale in London and must necessarily continue to do so; consequently, lacking the support of others who differ from the English tradition similarly to himself, he inclines to arrive cap in hand at the back door of the English capital and, however he may rationalise his acts, accommodate himself to its requirements. The result is too often a drastic limitation of his range, a cautious preoccupation with that portion of his available experience which he has begun to feel is approved matter; to the extent that his work is often distorted out of its normal development and its greatest strengths allowed to smoulder in repressed darkness while its smaller merits are desperately fanned into a flicker of mediocrity.

The fact that individual artists occasionally arise who do not allow themselves to be diverted by conditions and criteria antipathetic to

their particular statements is rather more than is deserved by a country which rewards their integrity by complete indifference. It is true that little opportunity exists for their work to obtain a hearing, but when the work is there and its importance evident it seems to be paradoxical that the people of this and other countries should be unable to enjoy it merely because it does not conform to the dictates of some other culture. It is hoped that the recent appearance of several new Scottish reviews will cancel this deficiency to some extent.

The revival in the artistic life of Scotland is of course most developed in literature where in addition to writers of such generally recognised achievement as Edwin Muir, Hugh MacDiarmid, etc., we find distinctive work being done both in the short story and in poetry; of the younger writers in these *genres* in English a very large proportion are Scottish, not only in birth but quite markedly in the orientation of their work. In addition to the poets of such groups as the 'New Apocalypse', seventy per cent of whom are Scots, there are numerous other Scottish poets of considerable worth writing in Scots, Gaelic and English who are not associated with any group or movement. While poets confining themselves to work in English have several reputable magazines in which they may and do appear with some regularity, poets writing in the Lallan or in the Gaelic are in the unfortunate position of having little chance of appearing in a review published outside of Scotland and therefore at the present time little chance of appearing in a review of any standing whatever.

Even with those writers who contribute regularly to the English reviews, I feel that their work would be more clearly assessed and more fully appreciated if they were published together in conjunction with the Lallan writers and other essentially Scottish work in music, painting and criticism, so that their work might be read within its natural setting of a certain racial outlook which they all have in common, and of which they are nearly all demonstrably conscious. That, aware as they are of this basic sympathy, they should yet be forced to write in relative isolation or as members of groups which have common denominators of a more or less superficial nature, is bound to have a crippling effect on their development. That it has had such an effect in the past should be sufficient justification for associating new Scottish writers in accordance with their racial identity rather than a haphazard and in many cases fortuitous allegiance to some particular literary fashion.

Some opposition is certain to be expressed to the support of work in Scots, in such terms as used by an English reviewer who recently described Mr. MacDiarmid's extraordinary achievement as midwife and

medical adviser combined in the birth of a new literary Scots as a squandering of his powers on the childishness of attempting to resurrect the language of Dunbar and Burns. There is, of course, no such language. Dunbar wrote in a flexible and eloquent tongue which had a maturity and European significance far removed from the parochial naïvety of the dialects which Burns, owing to the circumstances which Mr. MacDiarmid has set himself to remove, was obliged to exploit. It is to the revival of Scots as a written language that Mr. MacDiarmid along with certain other contemporary Scottish writers has dedicated himself. It is the position at the moment that the vast majority of people in Scotland speak Scots, in many dialects and with different degrees of 'purity' as in other countries, and consequently it may be presumed that as other evidence bears out they think in Scots also. They are, however, forced to write in English because there is no standard Scots and any attempts to make such a standard Scottish language possible have invariably been opposed by influential circles for reasons which may be disguised in various ways but which certainly do exist. It is this unendurable dilemma of inheriting a certain racial outlook and being forced to attempt its expression in a language which is in spirit completely alien and exclusive of it that has been the lot of Scottish writers for a very long time. Any student of Scottish literature of the past two centuries will be familiar with instances of the tragic results of this unhealthy state; Scott, Stevenson, Cunningham-Graham, and others all suffered to different degrees.

Such a condition can only be tolerated and an attempt at its remediation regarded as 'childish' if one considers the Scots language, and therefore the Scottish consciousness which cannot find full expression outside of it, unworthy of preservation; or if one considers the project to be hopelessly futile and not even worth attempting. The first is a matter of personal belief and knowledge of the facts. With regard to the second, it should be recalled that English was at one time superseded for 'polite' use and for all literary activity by Norman-French, which condition lasted for nearly two centuries. The revival of English after so long a period (heralded by Layamon's *Brut* in 1205—the continuations of the Old English Chronicle of Winchester scarcely count for continuity) is an adequate instance of the impossibility of an adult nation's contenting itself with a foreign vehicle for its distinctive and individual pronouncements.

As already stated, many of the younger Scottish poets are at present writing mainly or exclusively in Scots, and this is an enterprise which reviews such as the new *Scottish Art and Letters* will be glad to encourage. Whether English is not even for the English in a state of

exhaustion is a question which must be considered in the light of the many rather desperate forms of experimentalism which much of the most important contemporary work in it has taken; certainly for the Scottish writer it is not, and never has been, a medium in which he could draw upon the vast reserve of national experience which would inform a really adequate literature.

The position of Scottish literature has been particularly stressed because in the first place to it belong the most familiar of Scotland's cultural achievements, and in the second place the language question brings the problem into clear relief. In music and painting, however, the position is very much the same. The social order which supported the MacCrimmons' college of piping at Boreraig made possible the development of the *Ceol Mor* to a point where spontaneous improvisation could operate within a traditional mould of classical severity and, closely allied to the *piobaireachd* in many ways, the Gaelic song became something of exquisite and conscious formal beauty. But music was indigenous then and an essential part of the life of the people. To-day the position is different. The musical public is more catholic in its taste, and *less involved*. The native composer gets a minimum of official encouragement. And the opportunities of hearing traditional Scottish music of any importance are so few that it is no wonder that with all the magnificent thematic material of the *Ceol Mor* and the *Ceol Meadhon*, and the dynamic exuberance of the *Ceol Bheag*, no national orchestral tradition has emerged.

With painting the attention concentrates more exclusively on the present. There is not the same sense of an old tradition developed to a degree of maturity and then deserted that we have in poetry and music. But the position of the painter in contemporary Scotland is similar to that of the writer or composer, and he also must look for appraisal to a foreign court. In such circumstances there can be nothing more than some Scottish painters, and not 'Scottish painting' as there is French Painting or Italian Painting.

It is only when the writers and artists find an interest an encouragement among their own people that they are likely to use their best material. The atavistic unconscious represents a formidable extension of the individual's experience, and it is not surprising that most of the world's best artistic work proves on examination to be, not cosmopolitan, however international its appeal, but racial and national in the most uncompromising way.

## 2. WALES

## KEIDRYCH RHYS

*'In Wales, the true remnant of the auncient Brittons, as there are good authorities to shewe the long time they had Poets, which they called Bardes: so thorough all the conquests of Romaines, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, some of whom did seeke to ruine all memory of learning from among them, yet doo their Poets to this day. last; so as it is not more notable in soone beginning then in long continuing.'*

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. *An Apologie for Poetrie.*

In a short essay that was published some four months before war broke out, I tried to give in summarised form an account of how Welsh life affected literary work during the Thirties. It is a pregnant subject. Then I wrote: Probably more could be written about our poetry just now than that of almost any other small country. Yet although there seems to be plenty of energy, poetry is very little talked about (apart from personalities), and up to date practically nothing memorable has been written in the way of criticism; there is no impulse to gather the living specimen (people who have cropped up after those mentioned in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*) into anthologies until it has been deified by a book. Of course, everybody knows of the Principality's gift to the world, the Eisteddfod. Large sums can be raised for and by them. There is 'continuity' from the Middle Ages and from the sixth century (indirectly). Every little village has an Eistoddfod. The prize-winners are written up in the papers. The national congress is indeed an event; but it's fifty-to-one against one turning out a masterpiece.

*Folk and Popular Poetry.* The poems, and the audience, aren't so very different from the English Victorian audience. Every Welsh newspaper has its own Poet's Corner. A bard need never feel ashamed of his spare-time calling; if he behaves himself he won't be persecuted. Besides the minister of religion (rhyming is an accomplishment expected of them) each village can usually boast of two or three 'born' poets, be it the chemist, the plumber, or the poacher. There is personal circulation of poems in mss.—some achieve the dignity of being printed on postcards; youthful verse about local features and landmarks dug out from a sideboard drawer after a tea and beef-and-pickles supper, and recited boldly: satirical verse about local characters: many a peasant prothalamion. The *noson-lawen* ('merry night', literally), a folky farmhouse party plus harps, popularised again by our B.B.C.,

ends up with impromptu verse-making directed towards one's hosts; a bard is always expected to reel off at least four intricate lines when called upon to speak at public functions.

Farmers, too, are said to quote the *engllyn*, another snappy, epigrammatic-clerihew tongue-twisting form, over the breakfast-table in the more virgin areas. One may have a soft spot for this sort of thing; but too often peasant-wit seems to be the limit of our enlightened Welsh 'highbrow' writers as well. W. J. Gruffydd talks ambiguously of 'Y Genedl' in this connection. The heroic efforts of the Welsh League of Youth, Book Exhibitions, a naming of the six 'best' books of the year prize, the Welsh Book Club (Aberystwyth Press), school broadcasts, all help.

*Modern Verse.* Starting off at the turn of the century as rebels—against Nonconformist insensitiveness ('the Nonconformist conscience'), etc. Wales's academic poets are great figures today and well known. But today, I feel, that their *Tir N'an og* preoccupations, their nature sonnets and paganism, their rigid prosody, have weakened their work and their influence. They are looked upon as intolerant reactionaries by the younger poets writing in Welsh. The powers that be find it useful in their own interests to support any kind of puritan nonsense, and now these once daring intellectuals also support it because they (mistakenly) believe that this helps to keep the language alive. As Welshmen, with a poetic tradition behind them, in a country without any really outstanding native novelists, where poetry could and sometimes does have a wide circulation, they have certainly wasted their opportunities. Their taste in English poetry can be appallingly Georgian: they can be awful bores and humbugs. (Several look like grocers or 'the Prudential Man'.) Outside Saunders Lewis and Gwenallt Jones the succeeding generation has not thrown up any really important figures. I ought to add that our best weekly newspaper, *Y Faner*, is very good indeed; it carries a page written by Saunders Lewis, in which contemporary European writers are intelligently discussed, and a Poet's Corner under E. Prosser Rhys.

*The Anglo-Welsh.* The situation here (population 2,593,332 [1931 census], 909,261 of whom were Welsh-speaking) differs greatly either from the situation in Ireland before 1900, or that in Scotland to-day. Those readers sufficiently interested will find that Saunders Lewis has already said some excellent things—in fact, almost all there is to be said—about the lot of our imaginative writers, in his lecture recently published as a pamphlet, *Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Cardiff, 6d.). There is this great difficulty: the Anglo-Welsh 'intelligentsia' in itself at the moment is so inorganic as scarcely to be more than a group

who happen to be connected with a single region. They are a bit scared to show where they stand, won't commit themselves, can't make their opinions and influence felt on any particular matter as the Irish can or could through their Academy of Letters. It is easily noticeable that as generation succeeds generation more and more young 'artists' express themselves in English; and to-day there is undoubtedly a good deal of talent—a bunch of poets and story-writers, at least a dozen good painters, composers enough to hold a conference.

The position with regard to Anglo-Welsh writers now is briefly this: we have at last produced some talent, but we can't hope for any sort of patronage, although many thousands are squandered yearly on 'Culture'. Welsh writers are openly hostile and unfair in their attitude towards the so-called 'Anglo-Welsh'. They are even backed up by the B.B.C.'s Welsh Regional Station, which has become largely a language propaganda station. Our bureaucrats, who are really responsible for the mess we find ourselves in, would hardly relish a lot of critical writers with something to say to English-speaking Wales, i.e. the whole of Wales, and with a policy related organically to Wales and to 'world-affairs'. Accordingly they make their own arty *Poetry Review* personalities; bureaucrats in the past have 'bought over' any young man who might be dangerous, and they will continue to do so in the future. In such a position, the promising young men become soft and rootless; they have no worthy outlet for their talent so they choose an unworthy outlet, an easy way.

What is to be done? I am not very hopeful for the future. Our younger 'unemployed' writers (and Commonwealth scholars) ought to band together. It would do most of the Anglo-Welsh poets no harm to rough it, walk through the whole land and see what it is like: towns with in peacetime 75 p.c. unemployed, t.b. cottages, daft labourers, farms abandoned to rough grazing. I wish that the Left Wing, in England and Wales, would pay more attention to Nationalism, language, the difference between the English 'proletariat' and the Celtic Peoples, and culture generally. 'Moral courage and decision' should be our keywords. The attitude of once-promising fashionable young Welshmen round Bloomsbury, who show no interest in trying to reach a public here, or any interest whatsoever in Welsh life and native culture, results only in a general forgetting of their Welsh consciousness, and is typical of the general decrease in the intellectual capacity of the Anglo-Welsh. It was precisely our national consciousness that was responsible for our intellectual interests: there is a definite ratio between the two: our present-day loss is due to a widening in the gulf between the Anglo-Welsh and the Welsh. Until some of our contem-

porary creative writers and intellectuals realise some of these things, wake up and show some concrete interest in the community they profess to write for, express some sort of desire for social change and a different literary atmosphere in Wales, they will be merely an addition to the long list of people from Trade Union leaders upwards whose 'betrayals' form such inglorious pages in our social history.

Is this Anglo-Welsh movement a stage on the way back to the use of Welsh for literature? I sincerely hope so. For Wales the permanent medium of literature should always be Welsh. Our separate identity ceases for us when the language ceases. Then what is the purpose of Anglo-Welsh literature? One purpose is this: it is not that we want to show the English in a small country way that we can beat them at their own language (that attitude is responsible largely for the growing gulf between the Welsh and Anglo-Welsh); but that we want to make them aware of Welsh differences and virtues, and that English is the only medium in which this can be done. A zealous group of Anglo-Welsh writers, properly co-ordinated, should be valuable agents in securing sympathy in the better English minds for Welsh cultural ideals and aims. For we are going to need sympathy, even if we haven't it to-day.

Adverse conditions, the ring of circumstances, have quickened our expression; but it needs a lot more than a few suffering heroes, it needs a group movement, to put human consciousness higher, for the artistic imagination of a nation to flower.

## *Contemporary Irish Fiction*

ETHEL MANNIN

The names which come to mind in considering contemporary Irish fiction are Liam O'Flaherty, Frank O'Connor, Joyce, Mary Lavin, Francis Stuart, Michael McLaverty, Sean O'Faolain, Lord Dunsany, Stephen Gwynn, L. A. G. Strong, Peadar O'Donnell—and perhaps Don Byrne, though the romantic bewitchment of *Blind Raftery* and *Messer Marco Polo* seems as remote, now, as James Stephen's *The Crock of Gold*, first published in 1912—to belong to 'other worlds, long ago', rather than to the contemporary scene. Omissions from critical surveys are always of interest; Mr. H. E. Bates in his recent book, *The Modern Short Story* (Nelson) omits Lord Dunsany, and both he and Mr. George A. Birmingham in his *Irish Short Stories* (Faber & Faber) omit Francis Stuart and Peadar O'Donnell—it is true that Mr. Bates

and Mr. Birmingham in their respective books are dealing with Irish short stories and not Irish fiction in general, but it would be surprising to learn that neither Francis Stuart or Peadar O'Donnell had ever written any short stories, and they are not to be omitted from any consideration of what Mr. Bates himself refers to as 'the Irish genius' in English literature. My own omission of Elizabeth Bowen is accounted for by the fact that I am of those who find it difficult to accept her as an Irish writer. Her work, to my mind, has a curiously English quality; English middle-class; even when the scene is Irish the same bourgeois atmosphere remains. It is of some significance that in an interview recorded in *The Bell* (a Dublin review) she asserts that the Really Great Irish Novel hasn't been written yet, adding, 'Furthermore, I don't think it will be written until we produce a writer who thoroughly understands both the Catholic and the Protestant points of view. It's simply a sheer lack of psychological experience on the part of our writers. When the Really Great Irish Novel comes to be written I fancy you'll find that it has been written by a Protestant who understands Catholicism and who, very probably, has made a mixed marriage.'

Which immediately raises the point as to whether the Protestant can ever understand Catholicism in the real sense, and as to whether the Really Great Irish Novel can be other than Catholic. It is my opinion that the Really Great Irish Novel has already been written—by Liam O'Flaherty, under the title, *Famine*. I am not sure but that his *The Informer*, and *The Black Soul*, are not also Really Great Irish Novels. But *Famine* seems to me beyond all doubt a great novel.

In asserting that the Really Great Irish Novel cannot be other than Catholic, since the 'soul' of Ireland is as essentially Catholic as it is Nationalist, I am well aware that the Catholic Church is behind the preposterous censorship of books in Ireland, and that *Famine* is amongst the banned books, along with Kate O'Brien's fine novel *Without my Cloak* and her recent *Land of Spices*. Nevertheless, it is well to remember, as C. B. Murphy points out, in *The Bell*, that the censorship 'regularly bans books no Roman Catholic theologian would ban'.

In the Irish number of *Horizon* Frank O'Connor, writing on 'The Future of Irish Literature', says, 'When O'Faolain and I began to write it was with some idea of replacing the subjective, idealistic, romantic literature of Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Synge by one modelled on the Russian novelists'. By which he means Turgenev and Chekhov. Compare these two passages:

'He had a sense of the most appalling desolation. Even the melancholy moonlight on the river, the three-master and the sailor of the evening before, seemed to exist in an ideal world, far far above him;

a world that contained the magical lost beauty of Anne. First love and last, there was no one like her. Never before had she seemed so lovely, so pure, so selfless. But he had lost the way to her. The world would be magical again, but not for him.... Why? Oh, God in heaven why, why, why was it that all his assets became liabilities? Too late and only for a while he recognised the appalling truth that we evade nothing; the heavenly income-tax collector smiles and charges it up to the next assessment.

Never had he felt such a weariness of body and of spirit.... Had he been a little younger, he would have cried with misery, weariness and exasperation; a biting, burning bitterness, like the bitter of wormwood, filled his whole soul. A sort of clinging repugnance, a weight of loathing closed in upon him on all sides like a dark night in autumn; and he did not know how to get free of this darkness, this bitterness. Sleep it was useless to reckon upon; he knew he should not sleep. He fell to thinking... slowly, listlessly, wrathfully. He thought of the vanity, the uselessness, the vulgar falsity of all things human.... 'Everywhere the same everlasting pouring of water into a sieve, the everlasting beating of the air, everywhere the same self-deception....'

The first is from O'Connor's story, 'The Romantic', in his *Bones of Contention* collection; the second from Turgenev's *Torrents of Spring*. Quite different in theme, O'Connor's story, *Michael's Wife*, may be said to be of the same texture as Chekhov's *The Schoolmistress*, inasmuch as in both stories the climax is psychological—nothing happens in terms of action within the structure of the story, and yet something tremendous has happened. This quality of climax taking place in the minds of the characters is characteristic of Chekhov, commonly criticised, as H. E. Bates observes, on the grounds that 'nothing ever happens' in his stories, and it recurs in O'Connor's stories. In his lovely story, *Night of Stars*, again 'nothing happens' within the story itself, though the implications are deeply moving. The story, written as a radio script, is in the form of a monologue. A man is recounting to his friend his boyhood's devotion to his widowed mother, the dreams they dreamed together; his falling in love, and the accompanying sense of betrayal of his old mother, the wild grief at having hurt her, going to her room to say he was sorry and weeping in her arms, and the two of them clinging together. Whilst the story is being told the man's wife is fretting over their son who is out late, comes in and gives her short answers; she goes up to her room—'whenever he does anything to upset her she just hides away and bawls to herself'—and the husband having said goodnight to his friend goes up to her. All that is most poignant may be said not to happen in the story at all.

In his *Crab Apple Jelly* (Macmillan's) there is a story 'The Bridal Night' which is to my mind quite perfect. H. E. Bates asserts that Joyce's *The Dead* is 'without doubt the greatest story that ever came out of Ireland. Not having read every story that ever came out of Ireland, I would not presume to express an opinion, but I remember the story, and the intolerable pain of it, and the sense of completeness, but it did not completely 'shatter' me as did 'The Bridal Night', making it quite impossible to read anything else for the time being. In this story an old peasant woman tells of her son who is in the asylum these last seven years. The story is practically a monologue. The boy was in love with a young school-mistress who came to the place; when she became aware of his feeling for her, not reciprocating, she avoided him, and he went mad with the weight of her on his mind. He becomes raving, and the mother has the neighbours tie him up with ropes. In his ravings he calls constantly for the school-mistress, and it occurs to the mother that if she came to him it might quieten him. She sends for her, and the young woman comes; and the boy is quieted, and they unbind him, and he asks her to lie down in the bed beside him. The girl agrees, assuring the old woman that she has no fear and that no harm will come to her. The old woman tells it all very simply:

'We went out into the kitchen, Sean and myself, and we heard every word that passed between them. She got into the bed beside him; I heard her; he was whispering into her ear the sort of foolish things boys do be saying at that age, and then we heard no more, only the pair of them breathing. I got up, I went to the bedroom door and looked in. He was lying with his arm about her and his head on her bosom, sleeping like a child, sleeping like he slept in his good days with no worry at all on his poor face.'

In the morning the girl slips away, promising to return. Later the police come and without handcuffs or ropes take the boy away, and the old woman comments:

'And isn't it a strange and wonderful thing? From that day to the day she left us, there did no one speak a bad word about what she did. . . Isn't it a strange thing, and the world as wicked as it is that no one could be found to say the bad word of her?'

The author, true to the Chekhov principle of personal detachment, has no comment to make but that 'Darkness had fallen over the Atlantic, blank grey to its farthest reaches'.

There is in this story the same intensity of suppressed passion, of intolerable longing, that finds expression in O'Connor's *Michael's Wife*. In the second story in the book, *The Long Road to Unmera*, all

that 'happens' is an old woman's desire to go back to her native village to die, the efforts she made to get back, and how her son brought her back in the end to bury her there. In broad outline it is the theme of Michael McLaverty's *Lost Fields*, an old peasant woman living in a city and longing to return to the country. The final story, *The Grand Vizier's Daughters*, is another of those stories that 'scald the heart'. A besotted old man tells his daughters a story of a Grand Vizier who was 'a drunken blasphemous man no better than a Christian', and his daughter who was ashamed of him. The girl who has been listening cries out angrily, 'I'm not ashamed,' and then the old man gets up and goes towards the door, and

'He looked like a king; a Richard or a Lear. He filled the room, the town, the very night with his presence. Suddenly he drew himself erect; head in air, and his voice rang like thunder through the house.

"God help us," he said bitterly, "she was ashamed of her father."

The girl rushes after him, 'Her great brown eyes were starting from her head with terror; her face was like the face of a child left alone in a strange place'.

"Daddy, Daddy," she cried, "I'm not ashamed. Oh Daddy, I'll never do it again! Daddy, come back to me! Come back!"

If you are not crying, God help you; there is nothing for you but the spurious emotionalism of a gone-with-the-wind; you had best be leaving the Irish alone.

George A. Birmingham's analysis of Irish writing in his Preface to his *Irish Short Stories* is interesting, but curiously unsatisfying, as, to my mind, is his collection of stories. Oddly enough one of the best stories in the collection is Michael McLaverty's 'Wild Duck's Nest' which originally appeared in *The Adelphi*. I shall always maintain that McLaverty is at his best—a sure and delicate best—when writing of children, and this story has all the anguish of childhood's grief exquisitely portrayed. McLaverty is one of the 'coming' Irish authors to watch; Patrick Kavanagh, the young poet who wrote his autobiography, *The Green Fool*, some years back, another; and Maura Laverty, whose beautiful first novel, *Never No More*, was recently published by Longman's, another. *Never No More* is in some respects, in the details of the Irish country scene, reminiscent of the famous book, *The Farm by Lough Gur*, of which Shane Leslie says in his Preface that 'It is not a novel nor an agricultural tract nor a collection of folklore, but it possesses all their several interests without their fatigue'. It carries the reader through the nineteenth century and carries with it 'all the mists and memories, all the scent and sting of the Irish countryside'. Which also is true of Maura Laverty's novel, which is the story—though

there's little enough actual story—of a young girl and her beloved grandmother. There is no escaping the old woman in Irish literature. Not that anyone would wish to, for the old Irish peasant woman is as integral a part of Ireland as the tall dark Queen, Cathleen ni Houlihan, herself. In Yeats's play, it may be remembered the old woman is Cathleen ni Houlihan, and she is a young girl, and had 'the walk of a queen'....

Any future collection of Irish short stories will not be representative if it does not include something from Mary Lavin, whose first collection of stories, *Tales from Bechtive Bridge* (Michael Joseph) won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1943. This was followed in 1944 by another collection, *The Long Ago*. Her work has all that exquisite attention to detail, that acuteness of observation, material and psychological, which characterises Michael McLaverty's work, and all that capacity for scalding the heart which is Frank O'Connor's. In her stories, too, 'nothing' happens, in the Chekhov manner; everything happens in the human heart and mind; there is that terrible poignancy of small things. In a story entitled 'A Cup of Tea,' in her second collection, a young girl-student is coming home for a holiday; the mother has the house scrubbed and cleaned from top to bottom; she can talk and think of nothing else; she has the kettle at the back of the stove ready for the tea the girl will want after her journey. The mother has a grudge against the scientist father, absorbed in his work. She is jealous of the amount of time the girl spends in the father's study after her arrival, and because she hears them laughing together. She is restless, waiting for her daughter to come downstairs; she nags the servant, she scalds some milk the servant says is going sour. When at last the girl comes down she makes the tea, settles herself for the longed-for intimate chat, but the girl dislikes the scalded milk in the tea, she cannot drink the tea:

'The mother sat looking at her own tea, for which she too had suddenly a great distaste. Why did she boil the milk? She tried to remember. It wasn't sour. And even if it was beginning to turn it would have kept until Sophy had come down; a matter of thirty or forty minutes. Suddenly she remembered the way she had walked from room to room during those minutes, moving the kettle, stirring the fire, and filling in the time with aimless actions.

"Perhaps if you hadn't stayed so long upstairs I might not have had time to boil it!" she cried, flinging out the excuse without caring what effect it had. The evening was spoiled. The whole week of work and preparation was spoiled too. Everything was spoiled.'

The stories are all as 'slight' as that, as subtle, and as profound in

knowledge of the human heart, its wild griefs, its sudden insights, its aches and fears. She, too, inevitably, has her old women. In a story called *Grief* a son remembers his dead mother. This is how he remembers her:

'She used to stand by the fire in the kitchen, stirring soup in a saucepan with her left hand, and her right hand would be at ease on her hip. She could have done it better with her right hand, but then her back would have been turned to the window and she would not have been able to see the poplar tree in the yard; the poplar tree that she loved with some strong mysterious passion, that was never expressed in any other way than by staring at it.'

That was one of the most perfect memories that Dominic had of her, standing, dark in the dark kitchen, with her face cut out against the bright window-pane. It was not like the memory of a living incident. It was more like the memory one holds of a picture that has hung for a long time in a bedroom, and on which one has gazed in boyhood and manhood, in the heightened observation of sickness and in the indifference of health, in the bright and careless hours of the early morning and in the dark distorting hours of dusk. There was a monotony that amounted to immobility in the movement of the hand stirring the saucepan, and the dark leaves of the poplar travelling tirelessly across the silver window-pane.'

There you have the essence of Mary Lavin's work—the detailed observation, the emotional awareness. She herself, you feel, has observed that old woman, loved her, suffered her loss. There can be no doubt that in the firmament of Irish literature she is a bright particular star.

George A. Birmingham regrets the passing of 'the stage Irishman'; he deplores the influence of James Joyce, and absolutely declines to believe that 'the nature of Irishmen, the Irishmen who is written about, not the Irishman who writes, has been changed either by the Celticism of the Gaelic Revival or by the sanguinary horror of the revolution'. He considers that Irishmen have allowed themselves to be bullied or frightened out of writing anything amusing, and that it is a pity. This accounts for a certain faith-and-your-honour heartiness in some of his selections—Charles Lever, Samuel Lover, Somerville and Ross, Edward Downey, have produced the type of Irish humorous story he evidently prefers, though he includes a Yeats story in the collection, and two stories of the Civil War by Liam O'Flaherty and Frank O'Connor, who belong to the 'grim' school upon which he frowns. He complains that since 'the revolution' the amusing Irishman has disappeared from literature, and the 'everybody is far too much in

earnest now to write anything which is not either 'strong' or 'sordid': All the same, Lord Dunsany recently wrote *The Story of Mona Sheehy*—banned by the Irish board of censors—a novel which is light and beautiful and amusing, poetic, witty, and satiric, and Maura Laverty has written *Never No More*; and it was in the year 1926, after all the 'sanguinary horrors of the revolution', that Eimir O'Duffy wrote his witty satire, *King Goshawk and the Birds*, let it be remembered.

Whether or not one agrees with Mr. Birmingham's strictures on the post-revolution Irish writers, he makes one point which is irrefutable, and which is important in any consideration of Irish fiction. He says, 'The "bright love story" so much desired by magazine editors, is the work either of Englishmen or Scotsmen. You never get a story of this sort from an Irish writer.' Irish writing is, generally speaking, singularly free from that pre-occupation in the relationships between the sexes that characterises the bulk of English fiction. The Irish love-story, when it happens at all, is something different. The *Bridal Night* is a striking example of this. Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Black Soul*, and Francis Stuart's *The White Hare*, illustrate the point at full length. *The White Hare* is nothing if it is not a love-story, nothing if not romantic, but it would never satisfy the suburban woman lending-library reader who enjoys a good romantic, or a good 'strong' love-story; it is altogether too tenuous, too poetic, too wild and strange, this story of a young boy who loves his older brother's wife beyond belief. Perhaps that is the reason why—because, lacking the wildness and strangeness and poetry of the Celtic imagination, the whole thing is beyond belief, like the passion of *The Black Soul*. In *The White Hare*, the day before her wedding, the girl and the little boy go for a walk together; they come to an old ruined stone tower, from the top of which they listen to the sea, many miles away. The boy is excited and a little over-wrought and reproaches the girl for being 'so bloody grown-up'. The girl kneels down on the rotten floor-board of the tower, 'so that her pale stark face was a little lower than his', and she says, 'My pet, my pet, it isn't true. Married or single, young or old, you'll never be anything less than my dearest love and my wild, wild joy.' She puts her arm round him and holds him close to her, 'and they stayed like that by the ruined opening in the high room', and presently he tells her a secret. 'You're my bride, too. You're more my bride than anyone else's.'

I do not think that any English author could have conceived a love-scene in such terms. In his novel, *The Coloured Dome*, Francis Stuart has the lovers only come together in a prison cell whilst waiting to be shot. For the hero 'deep love can only be expressed through suffering'.

The heroine perceives that 'the love and tenderness awakened within him was not for any woman. She could only glimpse dimly the object of his passionate desire. To share in himself the anguish of the broken heart of the world.' O'Flaherty's *Black Soul* is similarly concerned with the 'dark night of the soul' and its ultimate emergence, but O'Flaherty does not touch the transcendental; his is a Guy de Maupassant realism, whether he makes a story out of a calving cow, a wave breaking upon a rock, or out of the labyrinthine ways of the dark twisted human soul. His genius and that of Francis Stuart are at opposite poles, but the same highly sensitised imaginativeness is at work, and it is an imaginativeness which is essentially Irish. It is significant that when O'Flaherty gets away from Ireland—writing for example of Hollywood—his work loses its vigour and becomes merely slick, the sort of thing that any competent writer could turn out; whereas only an Irish writer could have written *Famine*, *The Black Soul*, and the stories of *The Spring Sowing* and *The Tent*.

It is interesting to speculate upon the development of the work of George Bernard Shaw had he remained in Ireland....

Frank O'Connor, in his essay on 'The Future of Irish Literature', says of Sean O'Faolain's new novel, *Come Back to Erin*, that in the brief Irish sections of the book he is 'the old O'Faolain who is bewildered and distressed by what he describes', and that 'it is only when he reaches America that he begins again to use the full range of his powers.... The nest of simple folk has found a way out at last.' But if the nest of simple folk find their way out, into a wider, richer, fuller life, beyond the puritanism, the provincialism, the censorship and insularity, of Catholic Ireland, what becomes of the Great Irish Novel? I shall no doubt be accused of literary ivory-towerism and the narrowest kind of nationalism, but I firmly maintain that in spite of the puritanism and the censorship, and what O'Connor bitterly calls 'the emptiness and horror of Irish life' generally, Catholic Ireland is still the Irish writer's most fertile field, the 'untilled field' still, not in spite of her internal influences, but because of them—because of her nationalism, her isolationism, her Catholicism. The only inspired utterance left in this war-crazed world is coming out of Ireland. (Well, where else is it coming from? Certainly not from England or America!) And when I say inspired I mean inspired—the indrawn breath of authentic passion and wonder. Outside of Ireland we are all stale and sterile, trapped and doomed and damned, God help us. The only hope, now, of 'sunrise in the West', artistically speaking, creatively speaking, is Ireland—Ireland Catholic, neutral and nationalist (and here I am thinking of Ireland as a whole, thirty-two counties). Not 'Cathleen ni Houlihan'

eternally contemplating her own Tara' in a perpetual Celtic Twilight dripping with romantic mists, but striding, queenly, through the contemporary scene, and still, proudly, the source of inspiration for a nation of poets.

## Futurism and Poetry

MAURICE BOWRA

In 1912 Filippo Marinetti issued his notorious *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* and was greeted with some admiration and much ridicule. If any then believed that a new poet had arisen, they were soon disappointed. Marinetti has not added to the treasures of literature and his ridiculous career, with its noisy exhibitionism and its cult of violence, has found a suitable climax in his service with the Italian legion in Russia. But the *Manifesto* is still interesting as a historical document and has produced results of which its author cannot have dreamed and certainly would not approve. We can now see that it is an extreme example of those Modernist tendencies which invaded European literature in the early years of this century and have influenced a large number of writers. In the nineteenth century poetry had on the whole maintained a grand style and confined itself to certain recognised spheres of sentiment. Modernism has attempted to destroy the old style and to break down the old limitation of subjects; it aims at making poetry convey the real experiences of modern man in the language of his own times. It is responsible for the work of T. S. Eliot; it has even shown its presence in Blok's *The Twelve* and in the later poetry of W. B. Yeats; the younger poets of France and England owe to it their free handling of syntax, their conversational tone, their ability to treat of many subjects denied to the grave rhetoric of their predecessors, their cult of a refined, highly personal sensibility. Its origins go back to poets so different as Rimbaud and Browning, Donne and Mallarmé. It has taken various forms and can be seen at work in Dadaism, Surrealism, and in other movements which have from time to time attracted notice. In this general trend Futurism, as Marinetti defined it, has a distinctive place.

Like other forms of Modernism, Futurism tries to convey the experiences of modern man in a suitably vivid form, but unlike them it demands a complete break with the past and the construction of entirely new means of expression. While T. S. Eliot admits his debt to Middle-

ton and Laforgue and Ezra Pound claims acquaintance with Chinese and Provençal, Marinetti announces his 'horror of what is old and known, and love of the new and unforeseen'. He dismisses even *vers libre* because it limits the free expression of lyrical emotion. He wishes to destroy syntax, to get rid of adjectives and adverbs 'because the naked substantive keeps its essential colour' and to replace existing systems of punctuation by mathematical and musical signs. He advocates and practises a kind of telegraphic language, varied by different sizes and types of print in the manner of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés*. This annihilation of existing methods is said to be justified by the mechanical age in which we live. For Marinetti what matter in the modern world are such things as trains, machine-guns, aeroplanes, underground railways and wireless telegraphy. He claims that the experiences found in these are the most vivid that we know and that poetry must express them in a new manner. He rejects the familiar subjects of poetry and proclaims the 'need of spitting ever day on the altar of art'. Therefore he rejects love as sentimentalism and glorifies war as 'the bloody and necessary test of a people's force'. He seems to see man as living through his machines and as being almost a machine himself. He wishes to make poetry conform to this curious conception, and his own work shows how he thinks that this should be done.

Though Marinetti's opinions were well suited to the turgid pretences of Fascism, they produced no results of interest in Italy, where literature has never been so barren as in the last thirty years. The cult of 'heroic' violence has not touched Italian poets to write anything worth reading, and achievements in aviation and motor-racing, so popular with the successors of Alberti and Leonardo, have done nothing for art. This was perhaps to be expected, and no doubt many saw from the start that Marinetti's dreams were absurd in an age which has already outlived its first excitement over the internal combustion engine. In Western Europe Futurism made little impression. Guillaume Apollinaire took it up for a short period and in 1913 published his *Futurist Anti-tradition* which won notoriety by its use of 'le mot de Cambronne' and caused some scandal. But Apollinaire's own work, despite his way of presenting poems in the shape of rain or fountains in *Calligrammes* and his avoidance of any punctuation, remained classical in spirit and had none of Marinetti's violence. In England the periodical *Blast* breathed the hopes of Futurism through a few numbers, and then ceased. But we can imagine that in other circumstances this mechanical, revolutionary, sensational view of life might make a different appeal. Where machines have the charm of novelty, where revolution is more than a literary ambition, where violence is believed to serve high ends,

Marinetti's Futurism might produce effective results. By one of history's more fanciful ironies Futurism has had its chief influence in Russia, the country against which Marinetti, now a middle-aged major, has taken arms.

Like other modernists, the Futurists began by being rebels against established literary standards, and especially against those of the Russian Symbolists, whose grand manner and mystical convictions they derided and thought hostile to a truly modern poetry. In 1912 there appeared over the signatures of D. Burlyuk, A. Kruchenykh, V. Mayakovsky and V. Khlebnikov, a remarkable manifesto called *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*. It is amusing enough to deserve quotation in full:

'For readers our New First and Unexpected.'

We alone are the *face of our time*. The trumpet of the time sounds in our art of words.

The past is stifling. The Academy and Pushkin are more unintelligible than hieroglyphs.

Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc. overboard from the steamer of modernity.

Who forgets his first love will not know his last.

Who is fool enough to give his last love to Balmont's scented lechery?

Would it reflect the manly soul of to-day?

Who is coward enough to be afraid of tearing the paper armour off warrior Bryusov's frock-coat? Is there in it any dawn of unknown beauties?

Wash your hands which are filthy with the dirty slime of books scribbled by countless Leonid Andreevs.

All those Kuprins, Bloks, Sologubs, Remizovs, Averchenkos, Chernys, Kuzmins, Bunins, etc. etc.—all they want is a villa by the river. That is how fate rewards tailors.

From the heights of skyscrapers we look down on their insignificance.

We demand respect for the poet's right:

1. To enlarge the vocabulary with arbitrary and derivative words (neologisms).

2. To uncompromising hatred for the language used hitherto.

3. To tear with horror from their proud heads the crown of worthless fame made out of bath-room brushes.

4. To stand upon the rock of the word 'We' in a sea of whistles and indignation.

And if our lines show the dirty traces of your 'common sense' and

'good taste', yet the first lightnings of a New Dawn of Beauty in the Self-Sufficient Word are already trembling upon them.

This document shows its affinity to Marinetti and his kind. It is a complete rejection of the Russian literary past; it claims to be the real voice of modernity; it rejects old 'sentimental' themes like love and romance; it demands the creation of a new vocabulary; it hints at a glorification of mechanical things in its references to steamers and skyscrapers. It recalls Marinetti above all in its cocksure impudence, its strident desire to get rid of everything old, and its arrogant assumption that its adherents alone have the right to be called poets.

When the Russian Futurists so flung their ideas at the public, their country was enjoying a great revival of poetry. Many of the names which they dismiss so rudely are of men who helped to create the greatest period of Russian poetry since the death of Lermontov in 1841. The present which they so violently rejected bore no resemblance to the exhausted Italian scene on which the only figure of importance was D'Annunzio, and even he had passed his poetical zenith. It might be fair to judge the Futurists by their own claims and to see if they have justified them. The answer could only be that they have not. Of the four signatories, only two, Khlebnikov and Mayakovsky, need be treated seriously. Burlyuk produced nothing of lasting interest, and though Kruchenykh made amusing attempts to create a kind of 'Jabberwocky' language which recalls the later work of James Joyce, he seems to have abandoned it and to have descended to intelligible, though not very distinguished, writing. But the other two count. In a time of great stress and change they tried to make poetry live and conducted some remarkable experiments with it. This is not to say that they have done all that they promised, but they have done something, and that is as much as we can hope from writers of manifestoes.

Vladimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922) was a strangely compounded character. On the one hand he was a creative philologist, a man who loved words so well and had so fine a feeling for his own language, that he was always experimenting with it, inventing new words, trying old words in new combinations, feeling his way to some essential, primitive Russian which should be more expressive than the time-worn instrument of contemporary literature. On the other hand he was a prophet of the primitive and the irrational, of all those apprehensions and suspicions which uncivilised man feels because he cannot rationalise them. Khlebnikov was extremely superstitious in his own life and felt most at home among primitive peoples or in stories of men and women who are not moved by reason. The combination of such characteristics is uncommon, but it was well suited to Futurism which

both claimed an interest in the creation of new words and denied the rational nature of man. Marinetti had called for 'the word at liberty' and claimed the superiority of intuition to intelligence. Khlebnikov in his own way agreed with him. He wished to change his language not so much because he was tired of it as because he was by temperament an experimental philologist; he would have little to do with the civilised and rational way of looking at things because he was at heart uncivilised and primitive, a Slav who wished to get back to the soul of his race before Christianity and Westernisation had imposed their patterns on it, a man of letters who enjoyed displaying his skill at catching and conveying all the stranger shadows which pass over the human consciousness.

With an equipment like this Khlebnikov could hardly expect to be a popular poet. Nor was he. He is important because he exerted a considerable influence on other poets and because his poetry is, despite its oddities, valuable for its own sake. It took him time to find subjects which suited him, and his early work has an experimental character. He invented words, he played with roots and formations, and in his *Oath by Laughter* he created a whole poem of newly coined derivatives from the Russian word for 'laughter', *smekh*. It is a brilliant *tour de force*, amusing and wonderfully ingenious. Indeed the new words look strangely convincing to a foreigner. But as yet Khlebnikov's difficulty was to find subjects suited to this philological inventiveness, and it is not surprising that he sought out themes extremely remote from the modern world, in the Stone Age or the old Slavonic world. His manner varies with his subjects, but tends to be impressionistic and even telegraphic. His treatment of syntax can be seen from his use of proper names as imperatives:

*Farm-house at night—Genghiz Khan!*  
*Rustle, grey birches.*  
*Red sky at night—Zarathustra!*  
*But blue sky—Mozart!*

His Futurism, despite its primitive emotions, still keeps a high-brow air. There is a discord between his emotions and his intellect which he has not fully solved.

The solution was found for him by the War and the Revolution. Like other Russian poets, Khlebnikov viewed the war with horror and the Revolution with rapturous joy. If the first simplified his manner for him and drove him to express himself in a noble, austere manner, the second awoke in him an ecstatic excitement in liberty and a sense of vast new prospects opening to the future. While other poets saw the

revolution as a tragic event needed to purify Russia, Khlebnikov, who had been sent to prison for political reasons when a student, saw a new, vivifying force which should animate Russia to great activities and creation. In the first thrill of it he wrote poems which are almost like songs:

Now naked comes Liberty walking  
And on hearts scatters flowers of love;  
We march on in step with her, talking  
Like old friends to the skies above.

We are fighters whose hands never quiver  
When they bang on a resolute shield.  
There and here, and for ever, for ever  
The people its power shall wield.

From the windows let singing girls praise us,  
Of age-old campaigns are their songs,  
Of the Sun, whose true service obeys us,  
Of the People, to whom rule belongs.

A great simplification has taken place in Khlebnikov's style. The neologisms and learned, literary references have gone; the syntax is easy and straightforward. What remains is the vivid use of imagery to convey excited states of mind.

The revolution demanded and created other emotions than this, and in his poems from 1917 to his death in 1922 Khlebnikov found a proper field for his talents in a new kind of heroic theme. The poet Gumilev said of him, 'Many of his verses seem to be the fragments of a great epic which has never been written.' Khlebnikov wrote several poems which breathe a heroic spirit of rebellion. In some he touches on the present; in others he deals with themes from the past which were relevant to his time. His poem on Stenka Razin is a fine attempt to catch the spirit of the old rebel, who is the type of natural man asserting his rights:

And Razin's choked 'I listen'  
Rises up to the hills of day  
As a red flag flies on a roof-top  
And tells of troops on the way.

So too Khlebnikov used the figure of a wise philosopher in *Ladomir* to tell of the far-reaching aspirations, which the revolution woke in him for a Utopian future when men should be in harmony with nature and with each other:

You shall set up on earth a spool  
Where the thunder is only a wire

And with streams and dragonflies  
 Sing the girl of your desire,  
 A sign that all is levelled  
 Between labour and idleness.

He held such hopes of the revolution, and he died before they could be disappointed.

Khlebnikov was fully aware of what the revolution meant in horror and destruction, and his poems about it were characteristically sincere. He recognised the facts, but believed that something incalculably magnificent would arise from them. The mixture of his intellectual grasp and his high hopes is well displayed in *I believe, sang the guns*. It is a vision of the revolutionary scene in which the powers of new gods are revealed, and it hints at horrors of revenge and brutality:

The god of the pavements,  
 Painted in yesterday's blood,  
 In the briars of fresh graves,  
 In the bandages of sniping armies,  
 Looks from public places at night  
 With the large eyes of death,  
 In a frame of cobble-stones.  
 The picture of a grim god  
 On a grey board  
 Set up by the hands of the days  
 Hangs over the capital.

Khlebnikov dwells on the storm of destruction and the passions which drive it, on the death-sentences given in cellars, on the shattering of glass by bullets, on the eyes staring 'like two gun-barrels', on the noise of an alarm in the sky. Then he rises to his close:

The poplar we felled, the poplar in salvoes  
 Fell to the ground in leaves of lead  
 On the crowds, on the public places!  
 The poplar we felled, crashed, fell  
 Covering with death's leaves the faces of many.  
 All night long screams the iron rattle,  
 And stars croak over the roof of the death-chamber.  
 The night is blacker than pitch....  
 Multitudes of stars, multitudes of birds  
 Suddenly rise in the air.  
 I have startled them.

In this way Khlebnikov not only said what he felt about the revolution but found a means to reconcile his own conflicting gifts. In a highly sensitive and intellectual style he wrote about the primitive feelings which were at the root of his nature.

Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930), who was the associate of Khlebnikov, is the beginnings of Russian Futurism, was a man of very dissimilar gifts. He was no philologist and he had no yearnings for primitive life. His dislike of the past was complete and genuine, the disgust of a misfit for a society which does not honour him. Before the Revolution he announced his contempt for all writers and proclaimed that it was better to be a criminal or a business man. He went to prison more than once and was a natural anarchist. He had a commanding personality, a great height and a resonant voice. He understood the art of self-advertisement and drew attention to himself by wearing an enormous yellow tie—‘I made a tie-shirt and shirt-tie. Impression—irresistible.’ His personality seems to have some real similarity to Marinetti’s. He really liked noise and bluster and opposition. In him Futurism was a driving, self-assertive force rather than a means of expression. He was a malcontent, bent on destroying both for the fun of destruction and for his dislike of a world which hampered him. By an unforeseen stroke of luck he found himself included in a victorious majority and recognised almost as a national poet.

The paradox of Mayakovsky’s career is that this anarchical individualist should have come to be recognised after his death by Stalin as ‘the best and most talented poet of our Soviet epoch’. This success was not immediate. Lenin, for instance, said, ‘I understand Pushkin and appreciate both him and Nekrasov, but as for Mayakovsky, I am sorry, I do not understand him.’ Nor was Lenin alone. Right up to his death Mayakovsky met with considerable opposition from those who refused to believe that Futurism was the right art for a liberated proletariat. His peculiar manner was not well received by the All-Russian Union of Workmen Writers whose aim was ‘to create a proletarian socialistic literature, both artistic and scientific, answering to the ideals of the revolutionary communistic proletariat’. None the less Mayakovsky succeeded. His success was a triumph of character. He had long been a member of the Communist Party and accepted the triumph of Lenin with the words ‘It is my revolution’. He was determined to be a revolutionary poet and changed his art to suit the new times. By a bold syllogism he identified Futurism with proletarian art—‘Only the proletariat will create new things, and we, the Futurists, are the only ones to follow in the footsteps of the proletariat. . . . Futurism is the ideology of the proletariat. . . . Futurism is proletarian art.’ The logic may

not be impeccable, but the courage of the claim is undeniable. Anyhow, Mayakovsky and his friends were accepted as the poets of the Soviets.

The Revolution was welcomed by Mayakovsky because it destroyed a society which he disliked and despised. The sense of deliverance from it awoke in him a strong lyrical desire to sing of a new world in which men were free. He did not at first see this world very clearly or understand the difficulties which beset it. For the moment he was overjoyed that it had come into existence and that it offered him a self-realisation for which he could not otherwise have hoped. In this mood he wrote *Our March*:

Tramp squares with rebellious treading!  
Up heads! In proud ridges be seen!  
In the second flood we are spreading  
Every city on earth will be clean.

Pied days plod.  
Slowly the years' waggons come.  
Speed's our god.  
Hearts are beating a drum.

What gold is than ours diviner?  
Can the waspy bullets sting?  
Than our songs no weapons are finer.  
Our gold is in shouts that ring.

Green let the grass grow,  
Covering days past.  
Rainbow, gleam, glow,  
Let galloping years travel fast.

Do not look to the stars or bother;  
Without them our singing shall blow.  
Oh ask, Great Bear, our Mother,  
That alive to the stars we go.

Drink of delight! Drink! Shout!  
Veins with the spring-flood thrumming.  
Hearts up! Strike out!  
Our breasts are brass cymbals drumming!

This is a revolutionary song, but it is also a song of Futurism in its ecstatic denial of the past, its sense of a quickened and unhindered energy, its belief that life has begun to move at a great speed. For the moment it really looked as if Futurism was able to meet the poetical needs of the Revolution.

This ecstatic condition was soon brought into contact with realities. The Soviets, attacked by enemies at home and abroad and faced by appalling problems of organisation and education, began soon enough to take a realistic view of the position. The centralised authority demanded obedience before everything else and expected its poets to work for it and not to follow their own fancies. Though Mayakovsky did not agree with most of the literary groups which the Revolution produced, he was as ardent a supporter of the régime as any of them and turned himself into one of its most vociferous servants. He curbed his lyrical gift and tried to become an intelligible and even a useful poet. Even so early as 1918, when he felt that the Red Navy needed encouragement, he wrote his *Left March* for them. Like *Our March* it is inspired by the sense of vast new prospects and has all Mayakovsky's unrestrained enthusiasm, but it is closer to the facts of the political situation and touches boldly on it. His lyrical freshness is modified by his sense of reality. The poem ends on a defiant, bloodthirsty note:

Out there  
 Past the fiery peaks advance  
 To a sunny land unknown.  
 Past hunger,  
 Past oceans of pestilence,  
 Let millions march on.  
 Though hirelings circle to crush us  
 And the lava of steel flow swift,  
 The Entente cannot conquer the Russians  
 Left!  
 Left!  
 Left!

Does the eagle's eye grow dim  
 While on old haunts it lingers?  
 Make fast  
 On the throat of the world  
 Your proletarian fingers!  
 Fling chests out straight!  
 In the sky let the banners drift!  
 Who marches there with the right?  
 Left!  
 Left!  
 Left!

There is something here of the old ecstasy, but politics have come into the poetry and were never again to leave it.

Between 1918 and 1930 Mayakovsky wrote an enormous quantity of verse. He wrote many poems both long and short, plays, advertisements, posters. He was a great performer on the platform, and, like Marinetti, enjoyed reciting his works to audiences whose interruptions he rebuffed with wit and brutality. His collected poems are almost a history of the main issues that faced the Soviets at the time and cover a most surprising range of subjects. At home he declaimed against his countrymen's religious superstition, lack of hygiene, tendency to desert from the army, bad-mannered children, and ignorance of machinery. He urged them to buy at co-operative shops, to learn to fly, to use tractors, and not to complain about the increase of railway-fares. In foreign affairs he was no less eloquent. His visits to France and America did not impress him with the greatness of capitalistic civilisation, and his poem '150,000,000' is an almost hysterical defence of Russia against foreign countries. In *Mayakovsky's Portrait Gallery* he sketched satirical portraits of the foreign statesmen whom he most disliked, including Poincaré, Curzon, Mussolini and Pilsudski. He conducted controversy on the place of literature in the state, celebrated anniversaries and occasions of public rejoicing and mourning, and wrote a poem of almost epic dimensions on Lenin. Never was a poet more conscientious in serving the cause to which he has given his loyalty.

To create the effect he desired and to win the public attention that he valued Mayakovsky transformed his style. He rid himself of his old allusive, telegraphic, oblique manner and created a style suited to declamation. His versification is based on the number of stress accents in a line and disregards all unstressed syllables; it is in fact a kind of 'sprung verse'. His rhymes are extremely free and include assonance, *le rime riche*, and compound rhymes such as we find in Browning. He had his verses printed to show their structure, and this makes them look stranger than they really are. They are in fact an admirable form of rhetoric, easy to declaim and easy to understand. His language keeps some of its old telegraphic conciseness but in a new, conversational way. If it neglects grammar, that is because talk also does. The result was that when Mayakovsky recited his work, it made a tremendous impression on his audiences and made them feel that after all there might be something in poetry. If we judge it by the highest standards, this poetry is certainly not first-class, perhaps not truly poetry at all. It is effective verse, meant to secure certain ends, which in fact it secured. And it has many literary virtues. It has enormous vitality, occasional flashes of fancy and of feeling, a notable satirical humour, and a great grasp of the significant details of ordinary life.

To achieve this success Mayakovsky sacrificed not only his old anarchistic independence but this most precious talent, his gift for a special kind of ecstatic lyrical poetry. This deep instinct drew him, as it drew Khlebnikov, to form the highest hopes of the Revolution, but once he had undertaken his revolutionary duties, he found that there was little outlet for it. It was too personal, too refined, too unpolitical. At times it flashes back, as in his charming poem *I Love* (1922) which is an enchanting tissue of metaphysical conceits. It appears sometimes in more prosaic surroundings, as in *To Comrade Nette* (1926), where a ship named after an old friend is somehow identified with him as it comes to berth in the darkness. But on the whole Mayakovsky denied himself the use of his most individual gift when he set out to write public verse. In his last years his lyrical faculty seems to have strained towards release, and Mayakovsky tended to throw aside his didactic air for intimate revelations, as in his delightful *Very Good* which contains a lyrical statement of what he really liked and valued. If he had continued, he might have found a new field for the gift which he had for so long controlled and stifled.

The effort of will by which Mayakovsky turned himself from an anarchist and individualist into the voice of the Soviets was not made without heavy cost to himself. At intervals he fretted under the restrictions which his times and circumstances laid upon him, and he never endured criticism lightly. His natural outlet was in satire. In such a spirit he wrote two plays, *The Bath-House* and *The Bed-bug*, both of which were banned because they contained covert criticism of Russian conditions. Soon afterwards he shot himself. No suicide can ever be fully explained, and Mayakovsky's may have been as irrational as most others. It shocked his admirers beyond words, and some of them have tried to explain that it was due to a Trotskyite conspiracy against him. If we must find an explanation, it seems more probable that at the last he could endure no longer the restrictions which he had taken upon himself and that his old anarchist soul reasserted itself in this act of destruction. His last verses, in which he complains of the harshness of contemporary customs, suggest that this is what he himself thought. He had condemned poor Esenin, who hung himself when starving, as an irresponsible drunkard; now history took her revenge on him and drove him to a similar end.

Mayakovsky still has followers and imitators in Russia. Among them Kirsanov has recently celebrated the opening of a Mayakovsky station on the Moscow Underground and used the master's own metre and system of rhymes. But something is missing—the peculiar revolutionary excitement which Mayakovsky was able to create and which

was as much the product of Futurism as of the Revolution. Contemporary Russian poetry is going back to Pushkin and writes charming poems from which the explosive forces of Futurism have been eliminated. But in its day Futurism did something for Russian poetry. It abolished the grand style of the 'nineties and revivified the language. For a short period it was an admirable means for conveying the irrational, unrealisable hopes of the Revolution. By an extraordinary paradox this instrument fashioned by the last inheritors of an over-civilised society seemed for a time to be proletarian art. The appearance was delusive, and the literary style of Futurism had to be sacrificed to keep a small portion of its spirit. Now even that has gone. It was a temporary compromise, an expression of revolt which no longer has any purpose when a new society and new rules have been firmly established.

## *The Theatre: New Audiences for Old*

WALTER HUDD

Whatever the incentive to playwriting, it is certain that plays will be always primarily written to please the public. It follows that the smaller the public, the less encouragement for the playwright; the weaker the demand, the poorer the output. And when—as until recently in this country—the play-going public is drawn almost entirely from one section of the community, there follows a necessary limitation of theme and narrowing of scope.

I believe that the vitality of the theatre is conditioned in the final analysis by its patrons. Before this war I think that was very plain. The theatre showed every sign of cultural decay. Apart from one or two isolated attempts by certain theatrical enterprises, and one or two progressive playwrights who attempted to give some lead, there was next to no real development in the theatre: if anything, perhaps, a retrogression, largely due to confusion of the external situation. That section of the community which had the leisure and the means to support the drama seemed in those pre-war days to be easily satisfied with an uninspired iteration of conventional dramatic themes, usually in a class background, and far removed from the actualities of the situation in which they were living. Or else the subject matter of the plays which were most popular dealt with sex, in its most sensational complexities; or with crime, in its near-romantic squalor; or with neurosis. Now nobody will deny that a man may be a lover, a criminal, even a

lunatic, but when such characteristics are portrayed on the stage to serve a merely sensational effect, the result is one-dimensional, fleshless and bloodless, spurious. The emphasis employed is then no more than emphasis, without significant relationship to life. Yet always behind this façade the greater forces for the growth and development of life were contending, and an increasing number of people were becoming uncomfortably aware that there was something rotten in the state of Denmark. For however much we would like it to be otherwise, life itself is change, and any attempt to resist or to retard change will cause explosion. So with the theatre: a theatre which does not contain within itself the capacity for reflecting change is doomed to sterility.

Since the situation I have sketched, grave events have changed the face of the world. With those events many values, set traditions and prejudices have been swept away. Now there is a unity of interest, a shared experience of suffering and collective effort with a common purpose. Conditions are ripe for a broader and richer development of the drama to reflect, in the living theatre, the new situation, the new integration of life. For I think few will care to deny that people's minds and their outlook have been lifted above the contemplation of the trivial and the spurious. There is, I believe, a sharpening of emotional feeling and a quickening of the desire for expression and release. This must inevitably lead to a demand, however undirected and vague in expression as yet, for a living theatre, for *real* plays and for *true* acting. The primary duty of the artist at such a time in history is to satisfy this popular impulse.

But I do not wish to seem unreasonably optimistic. For this present opportunity can so easily be abused if the rising demand for entertainment is fed with cheap stimulant. From the beginning of this war until to-day, the closing months of 1944, the theatre, it seems to me, has passed through three phases. These have been described elsewhere as collapse, delirium and rally. The collapse followed largely from the unfair and unnatural centralisation of the theatre in the West End of London, and was inevitable when the blitz closed the great theatres there for a time. Then came, in due course, the delirium, when the sudden upsurge of popular demand for entertainment set the managers wildly searching for what was thought to be safe, if not suitable, material to satisfy it. Then we saw the plunging into the rag-bag of the past and the wholesale revival of last-war successes. But these outworn old-timers could not last for ever. So came gradually the third phase, the rally. Companies of players—enterprises like the Old Vic, with a fine tradition of public service—began touring the outlandish provinces. For the first time for heaven knows how long one of the best

orchestras in the country, the London Philharmonic, went out bravely into Darkest England, and everywhere they went the response was magnificent. The people were beginning to show what they wanted by welcoming the best when it was brought to them. The demand had begun; the supply must now be created. We have inspiring instances of the later development of this situation when townspeople began to band themselves together to present petitions to the mayor or the local theatre manager asking to be allowed to share the experience of more fortunate places.

Into the foreground of this cultural stirring came C.E.M.A., representing a valiant effort to satisfy the increasing interest of the people in fine art by sending out exhibitions of pictures, groups of musicians playing the great classics and lastly, the drama. This latest development has increased greatly in the past two years. It is too much to expect that C.E.M.A. in itself can satisfy the whole demand, but it is certainly leading the way to a fuller stimulation and satisfaction of this hunger, and is creating an audience which will spread throughout the nation, if the good work continues as auspiciously as it has done. By building up a high standard of dramatic taste—at first in a small way, and later (as we hope) more largely—C.E.M.A. gives a lead also to the commercial theatre, which will need to readjust its values to meet the new demand. There is already some evidence of such readjustment.

I myself have been chiefly concerned in touring munitions hostels and the smaller provincial towns. Recently we took out two short plays of Bernard Shaw and a classic drama by Ibsen. We found by experience that in those towns where the Old Vic or some other persevering enterprise had done the hard pioneering work of building up a sound local tradition of dramatic taste, there was a very ready and vastly enthusiastic reception for the plays we took them. But in other places, where no such pioneering work had been done, the local taste had been nurtured on roadshow and revue, we had a very up-hill struggle and played to poor business. But even in such places, the real demand was plainly there, and we had clear indications of an undercurrent of enthusiasm waiting to be canalised: which proves my main contention, that public taste can and must be educated to an active appreciation of the best, that the people are ready for good drama, and once they have tasted it, will be satisfied with nothing else.

This brings me directly to an important subject: the hostel audience, which C.E.M.A. particularly encourages and develops. All over this country are factories, hidden in out-of-the-way places; attached to these factories are the hostels in which the people who work them are housed. Most of the workers are girls, who previously were employed

perhaps at home, or in shops and offices, and during the war have been engaged upon tedious and often perilous work vital to our war effort. These brave and hard-working girls certainly deserve all the good entertainment we can bring them, and they constitute a specialised audience in many respects, by reason of their isolation in communal dwelling centres or hostels in remote places. They are drawn almost entirely from the working class, and are therefore, from the point of view of the actor, rather special, completely unsophisticated audiences, unaffected by convention or theatrical prejudice—and, I may add, wonderful to play to.

Many of them had never seen a play before in their lives, so when we took the two Shaw plays, *Village Wooing* and *Man of Destiny* to these munitions hostels, I confess I felt a little nervous, although I was convinced that such audiences would readily accept drama of quality. I need not have worried. We have seldom played to more receptive, more lively, or more enthusiastic houses. They did not miss a point of the fast-flowing, witty, but by no means simple dialogue, and they came to tell us afterwards that they had never enjoyed a show more. Later this year we took Ibsen's drama *Hedda Gabler* to some of the same hostels, and found the same exciting experience. Ibsen was a tremendous success. So much so in fact, that a demand soon came from other hostels which had not seen the play, and in answer to that demand we recently took out a greatly extended tour to cover five weeks, when many other communities of workers thus had an opportunity to see *Hedda Gabler*.

As a general principle it has been found that the best hours for performances are between 7 to 9 p.m. Owing to the three shift system, morning, afternoon and night, two shifts are usually available at this time to draw upon for audiences. In addition we fit in as many extra performances as we can, when the girls themselves request it. For instance, the afternoon shift returning at 10.30 p.m. is glad to see a performance beginning at 11.30 p.m., and finishing about 1.30 a.m.! Or again, a performance for those on the night shift, who for one reason or another were unable to be present the previous evening, may be given at 10 a.m., on their return from work. Shaw and Ibsen at 10 a.m.! However, we soon got used to these unconventional hours. And surprisingly enough soon found that our morning audience, which had been hard at work at the factory bench all night, was the liveliest to play to!

There is another interesting innovation. In the hostels the actor necessarily lives side by side with his audience and has therefore every opportunity to assess its reactions. The customary separation of the

actor from his public is altogether ended, and there is the fullest scope for discussion about the play between the people who performed it and those who saw it. This discussion is not yet on an organised basis, but the opportunity is there for the personal exchange of ideas. However contrary it may be to the established tradition, in my view it is no bad thing, as this closer and more intimate contact can teach the actor a more comprehensive view of life. I should like to see discussion organised between the cast and the audience. It would not only help the playgoers to a fuller understanding of the drama as an expression of human behaviour, but it would increase the actor's sense of responsibility towards his own job. For too often he behaves on the stage in a manner dictated by his author and director, without taking the trouble to analyse very closely why he does so. It would harm none of us to be put on the spot sometimes by a direct question in public!

As I have shown, the hostel audience is completely uninhibited and leaves one in no doubt as to its enjoyment, legitimate or otherwise! It is made up of vital, almost exuberant playgoers. Sometimes during a performance one or two will comment aloud on the action of the play, but they are quickly 'hushed' by their more responsible neighbours who know that theatrical convention forbids the actor to answer back—as he moves, like a train, on pre-destined lines. And here is another important point. We have found a very vital impulse among such audiences to identify themselves with the different characters in the play. The closer the character to their own experience of life, the more complete this self-identification—which obviously makes for the fullest enjoyment of a dramatic situation. In Shaw's *Village Wooing* (with which most readers will be familiar) the direct persistence of the shop girl in her battle of wits with the 'intellectual' writer of Guide Books, found such an echo that I, in playing him, soon discovered that I was not merely duelling with one character on the stage, but with three or four hundred in the audience! We found even, when playing Ibsen's drama, *Hedda Gabler*, that though his characters are remote from such a background, so closely did our hostel audience follow the dramatic development of the play that they sometimes commented aloud about the outrageous behaviour of General Gabler's daughter. They were quick to appreciate the deep human values of the situations and to draw the moral.

For there is essentially a realistic approach: as witness a remark made to me afterwards, when discussing the play, by one of the audience: 'That was an exciting play—but my word, what a woman! What she wanted was a spot of hard work—then she wouldn't have had so much time to waste in messing about with other people's lives. She might

have learned about making things instead of smashing them!' Then there was the man who resented Shaw's famous description of the Englishman's character, which he puts into the mouth of Napoleon in his play, *Man of Destiny*. This man said he thought Shaw has rather cheated the issue, as it was not properly a description of national character, but an exposition of political development at a certain moment in history, and could apply equally well to any country during a period of imperialist expansion. This is the sort of comment which shows how closely members of our audience follow even a difficult dramatic theme, and it also shows the value of the sort of discussion I have described. Then there was the little Scots girl who said, yes! she had enjoyed the Shaw plays the night before, but added, 'I could'na laugh'—and when I asked why, replied to my surprise, 'I did'na want to miss any of it!'

It may be helpful now to suggest the sort of plays which would appeal to such audiences. Certainly we know them to be eager and ready to receive the play which deals most closely with their own lives. At the moment we take them the classics or well established plays of the past for lack of newer material. They are in a formative stage of their theatrical education and it is very important that they should have the best we can give them. Even at this stage the work that has been done gives them a comparative value by which to assess second-rate forms of diversion. But the urgent need now is for new plays through which to reach that more perfect self-identification with the characters on the stage which is one of the more intense pleasures of the theatre. The increasing size of the audience demands an increasing diversity of theme. The primary duty of the dramatist, who possesses as his talent a heightened perception, is to interpret life in all its ramifications for the mass of the people who have feelings, to make the people aware of true perceptions and genuine feelings on whatever plane he chooses to work. Whether he writes factual plays, plays about the relationship of individuals with each other and with society, or plays helping people to understand the present conflict with all its manifold dramatic possibilities, or biographical plays dealing with some of the great men in our history, and the role of the ordinary people in forming our traditions and institutions (too often taken for granted and accepted without knowledge of the part played by their forbears), enlivening and awakening their own awareness of the part they can play themselves in forming the present and the future; whatever his theme and however he chooses to write, there is no need for the playwright to subvert the heroic or shirk the melodramatic. Let him take examples of the fine heroism shown by ordinary people in the field of war, or civil defence, or the family or the factory.

These are themes which can hold all the excitement and exhilaration now falsely stirred by the crime thriller—and in addition to this authentic thrill, can show something of the innate kindness and essential humanity of men, against the vaster background of the present tragedy, inspiring hope and giving encouragement for the future. And let the playwright rejoice that at last he is freed from the set conventions which have ruled for too long in the theatre. These new audiences will not limit him to three acts—or to triangular dramas in rectangular sets—or a country house background. He need not bother his head with labels—naturalism, expressionism, symbolism—he has full scope for any form which he can use with skill. He can write his plays any way he likes, to serve his purpose, provided only that the human values in what he writes are strong and true. But while he has greater freedom in this direction, there are limitations of another kind to be borne in mind. Those are the limitations of material conditions. Many of the halls and theatres in which we have to perform are lacking in elaborate equipment. There is no space for manifold settings and large casts. I do not defend such conditions, but they do exist, and if they impose simplicity upon the presentation of a play, that in itself is no bad thing, as it means that the spoken word unaided by elaborate scenery must create the dramatic atmosphere in which the play's action can develop. (As an example I quote Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, in which the author gives the whole history of a town with frequent changes of locale, without the aid of scenery.)

Inevitably the supply will lag behind the demand, but my great hope is, that with such encouragement as is now evident in the new situation, the playwright may respond to the impetus and help us to make the theatre much more a place of adventure—not a place of cheap escape from the realities of life. The playwright will do best to take hold of these realities boldly and bend them to his purpose, so that the theatre may become again a source of inspiration, of understanding and of fulfilment.

## *The Appreciation of Music*

EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST

Music is a sphinx whose riddle is never solved. Yet, with the appearance of any new composer of substance, the sphinx asks her questions again: Why do you love me? What is my flesh? My heart? My brain? How does my blood flow? And because she is invisible, we

cannot answer. Between her and us stretches a dark sky; the silent atmosphere which is music's medium. The stretched drum, the taut string, the pursed lips, the tiny slot of reed, the lifted baton, the poised finger: all are images of that extreme tension without which the sphinx cannot make her presence felt, her voice heard.

All this, no doubt, is poetry of a kind, like Rilke's 'Music, breath of statues'. But a poetic description can be as exact as a scientific one, or as a logical definition; the difference lies in the region of the mind appealed to. Remaining, for the present, in the poetic region, I would observe that the architectural metaphor has always seemed to me unsatisfactory as an image of musical effect. I emphasise *effect*, since, from the point of view of the mechanics of composition, the structure of any art, being concerned with form, calls to mind at once the one art which exhibits its dependence on form at every level. But for an analogy of the effect of music I prefer that of the dark sky mentioned above, which gradually becomes patterned by a counterpoint of stars, in all degrees of brilliance and definition; now flowering in swift clusters, then again spaced in slow succession, rising or falling; near and vivid accents in the invisibly drawn outline of some earthly shape, or so far and so many as to seem a cloudy background to the others; yet all a-tremble with the wiry singing of light, across and across the infinite stave of the sky. In some constellations—the Plough, Orion, Cassiopeia—the notes are arranged in a tune one recognises. Far more often the combinations are not 'given' at all, but depend upon the accidents of vision and of fancy.

Now this night, being imagined, is in our head: it is our brain, and the stars are the nodes in it which become connected by a train of thought. The physical processes of cerebration remain extremely obscure, but it seems probable that an elaborate kind of telephone exchange must occur within the skull in order that ratiocination should take place at all. I suggest, therefore, that the outline thus 'spelt out' in the material of the brain by the process of experiencing an idea or an image is the same as that followed by the successive notes of a melody, or the shifting of a harmonic process, that seems to us to express the emotion appropriate to that idea or image. This is, of course, mere speculation; but the fact that (to take only two instances) certain successions of sixths have so constantly been resorted to by composers to suggest solitude or sadness, and certain successions of thirds to suggest sweetness or affection: this fact (and it is easy to verify) does, I think, suggest that these things are not as fortuitous as they seem and that a physical answer to the sphinx's riddle must exist. But even if this theory of a brain-graph should contain truth, it takes

us no further towards solving a much deeper mystery, viz., the ability of the human mind to transcend the temporal flux, and therefore to be at one and the same time itself and more than itself. So ancient a problem would not be worth while mentioning here, were it not that music provides a very vivid—perhaps the most vivid—illustration of it. For, unlike other artistic *percepta*, such as pictures or architecture, music is presented to the mind dissolved in the temporal fluid itself. Yet the length which a given piece of music takes to move through the mind is never equal to the emotional length which it is felt as displaying. This last, be it shorter or longer than the actual duration of the piece, is inevitably felt as a spatial relation—inevitably, because it runs, so to speak, at right-angles to the physical continuum and thereby constitutes a second dimension.

This phenomenon is to some extent involved in the appreciation of other arts, as for instance in the discrepancy between the specious length of an episode in a novel and the time it takes us to read that episode and again in the 'spatial' effect of a poem. But in both these examples we are up against other factors than that I have ascribed peculiarly to music. In the case of the novel, the management of the time sequence is one of the cardinal problems of the art, which makes no appeal whatever to the eye; and it is a matter of common knowledge among novelists that, for instance, a very great span of time—especially if filled with significance—cannot be satisfactorily conveyed except by consuming a relatively large amount of the reader's actual time.

Where poetry is concerned, the same rule does not apply; for, by stealing some of the effects of music, and allying them to verbal meaning, verse is able to achieve a far more elastic manipulation of specious time than prose can. Here, too, the visual effect of a printed poem must be taken into account; few modern readers are aware how greatly the shape of a poem on the page, the differing lengths of the lines, variations of type (capitals, italics, roman) and so on, contribute to the emotional impact they are receiving.

The recent controversy over the use of 'background' music in broadcasts of poetry has thrown light on this aspect of the subject, showing clearly how ignorant even poetry-lovers are of the important function played by the printed page in contributing to poetic expression. No rules can be laid down for a procedure as yet so experimental as poetry spoken into the microphone; but it has been my experience that in cases of blank verse, heroic couplets, and kindred metres, where the aspect of the page is homogeneous, the lines do not vary in length and the form is not stanzaic; in such cases the voice is usually sufficient to carry the full burden of the poetry, whereas, in the case of highly

lyric or rhapsodic poetry, or verse couched in metrically elaborate stanzas, the use of a discreet musical 'frame' is clearly indicated. Listeners who object to this practice would, I suggest, cease to find it vexatious if only they would not try to separate the music from the verse in their minds. When you look at a picture you are aware of the frame as setting off the canvas and isolating it from the wall; but you cannot concentrate on both picture and frame simultaneously. In the same way, when listening to broadcast poetry, it is always the *words* which should be kept in the foreground of the attention, while the music is allowed to enclose the verse and outline its shape. If this is impossible, then the music is either inappropriate or wrongly balanced. There is nothing inherently vulgar or catchpenny in the use of music with poetry, which is as old as the world; but the procedure being admittedly a delicate and difficult one, it is seldom followed with propriety.

The two-dimensional aspect of music is best seen in opera, because there the emotional and intellectual content is more obvious than in 'pure' music, where the specious time may go unperceived by the more inattentive type of listener. An act of an opera, taking, say, fifty minutes, may include, without omitting any of them, a series of events covering, say, ten hours of specious time. The word commonly used to cover this feat of compression is 'form', and although music can never, at any phase of its development, have been able to dispense with form, it is clear that those aspects of it which correspond to perspective in painting and which enable music to convey specious time by artifices of duration, were originally instinctive and none too successful. Such improvisation as was permitted to the singers of Plain-song, for instance, is little more than the raw material of music; it is as a tape measure pulled out to a certain length and then left. Gradually a sense of form—i.e. a sense of the relation of specious time to duration—began to be imposed by artistically sensitive persons, until, at the turn of the sixteenth century, the emergence of the arioso displays clearly the first conscious attempt to convey an emotional sequence by means of a musical device which foreshortened that sequence in the interests of intensity. This was not very adroitly done: even Monteverdi sprawls somewhat, and in his ariosi it is the stately beauty we admire, rather than any skill in the building up of an emotional effect—which, indeed, is there at the onset. This music is curiously static—as much so, I think, as modern Tzigane music. But the latter is for every other reason odious and would hardly be mentioned in this context except to show the dangers that result from allowing an improvisational technique to run away with composition.

But the arioso is an essentially operatic unit. This brings us back to the form which first compelled composers to consider the problem of specious time. For a complex dramatic form like opera involves three distinct kinds of unit, all of which juggle with duration according to dramatic necessity. There is the aria, or the concerted piece, the object of which, being the exhibition of an emotional state, is to suspend the action by prolonging the duration far beyond what is necessary merely to express the emotion in words. There is recitative, which in its strictest form (*recitativo secco*) virtually reduces the two kinds of time to an equality, so that a piece of dialogue which in life would take six minutes to speak, take six minutes of operatic time. And finally there is the purely dramatic music, which usually conveys a considerable specious time through a movement that telescopes the actual duration of the event described.

For a century and a half composers of opera were content with this threefold division of the form, which on the whole worked well. Its drawback was a certain lack of homogeneity, a tendency which, in the feebler cases, led to a real absence of cohesion. This can be seen by comparing, say, *Cosi fan Tutti* with Cimarosa's *Le Astuzie Feminili*, or *Der Freischütz* with Lortzing's *Undine*; and at a later date Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* with Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict*. The *Zeitgeist* will have felt that something radical must be done; and produced Wagner.

The revolution wrought by Wagner in the harmonic field has tended to obscure his equally important and thorough handling of the problem of specious time—a problem which was, of course, to him a cardinal one. Complete homogeneity of the musical stuff, always in the interests of dramatic immediacy, was the aim of this powerful, though not always very sensitive, imagination; in effect it ended by amalgamating the operatic units into an infinitely elastic kind of arioso which (like fugue) is at this stage of its evolution a texture rather than a form. The old units can still be detected (though already in process of disintegration) in *Lohengrin*; they are almost resolved in the first two operas of *The Ring*, and completely so in *Tristan*. Once the new musical-dramatic texture had been achieved, the problem of form presented itself anew, since the old units were no longer there to relay the action. With the intuition of genius, Wagner solved this problem by adapting and extending the experiments in sonata form contained in the great works of Beethoven's final period—the sonatas and string quartets rather than the orchestral works. The third act of *Tristan*, for instance, is in fact an enormous first movement of a symphony, with first and second subjects, development, recapitulation and coda. The

huge scale alone prevents the casual listener from being aware of this fact, which Alfred Larenz has exposed with so much skill.

This wholesale reconstruction of operatic form enabled Wagner (and after him others) to compose on a scale hitherto undreamed of and at the same time to confer on these vast works more than a semblance of unity. So that what Wagner meant when he spoke of opera's being 'the art of transition' was this: how to solve the relation of duration to specious time in dealing with so large and complex a unit as the act of an opera—and beyond that the opera as a whole. In cases of this kind, failure may tell us more about the problem than success, and it is those acts and scenes of his later operas where Wagner fails to hold our attention, or holds it only with difficulty, that best reveal the limitations of his method; for it is in the miscalculation of the time factor, not in the quality of the music, that the error lies. I think it is not generally realised that, for instance, the real reason why we find it so difficult not to fidget during the last scene of *Tristan*, Act II, is not because we have been emotionally exhausted by the love duet, still less because the music of the last scene is in any way feeble or uninteresting, but because the events—emotional and actual—with which it deals are improperly represented by the duration of the music, both in its smaller units and in the aggregate. The same criticism is true of the scene between Wotan and Brünnhilde in *Die Walkure*, Act II—though here the miscalculation is less grave. Readers can supply other examples for themselves; it will no doubt occur to them at the same time that the most gifted of the later exponents of Wagnerian dramatic methods, Richard Strauss, has shown himself a good deal more adroit in the handling of the time problem than his master. When he fails, it is in the quality of the music, never in the conveyance of specious time. *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which deals in units of all sizes within a very massive framework, is in this one aspect an even more conspicuous success than *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Another factor which must be taken into account in following the management of specious time in nineteenth-century music, is the development of orchestration. Beethoven may be said to be the first composer who was interested in orchestration for its own sake (i.e. for reasons not purely musical) and his example was very quickly followed. The evolution of the modern orchestra, between 1800 and 1914 (when the classical reaction set in), was directed towards an ever-increasing amplification of the means of *poetic* expression. The results were various and must be judged separately; but it will be obvious that so considerable an accretion of orchestral resources must imply a change in the methods whereby specious time was calculated, whether the music was overtly dramatic in character or not.

In other countries, the operatic solution was slower, partly perhaps because a more delicate sense of form, in France and Italy especially, may have made a change seem unnecessary. Yet, however much we may enjoy *Carmen*, *Aida*, or *Eugen Onegin*—and not to enjoy them would be devilish—I think it is possible to feel some little dissatisfaction with the ‘continuity’ of any given act. Neither Bizet nor Tchaikovsky was master of operatic transition, such as Wagner became; and even Verdi neglected this aspect of his art until late in his career. From this point of view alone *Otello* could be described as Verdi’s *Lohengrin* (the other points of resemblance between the two operas are dramatic, not musical), and I think it is impossible not to feel that *Falstaff* represents a formal advance on *Otello*, magnificent as the latter is.

Within the units themselves—arias, duets, ariosi, and so on—both Verdi and Tchaikovsky were always instinctively right. To take a single example, I know nothing (unless it be the finale of *Figaro*, Act II) to compare, for magical felicity, with the conversation that opens the drawing-room scene in the third act of *Eugen Onegin*. This passage, which leads up to Prince Gremin’s aria, is very little longer in duration than the spoken words would be; yet the music, flowing in and out of and around the words, holding them in the graceful paragraphs of the waltz, has the effect of making the passage seem even shorter than it is—especially in retrospect, after the long arrest created by the Prince’s aria.

I instance this passage because it happens to be a favourite of mine; others will recall their own favourites in the work of Verdi, Massenet, Nicolai, and even Gounod. But when a composer of the highest genius feels it possible to throw an opera together as Moussorgsky did with *Boris Godounov*, it is clear that a change of method is needed. For that reason Wagner must be said to have won this particular round; but his solution was ideal only within the framework of music-drama as he and the heirs of his tradition conceived it. The reaction from Romanticism, in the years between the first and second German wars, involved a reconsideration of specious time in opera, and with it a partial return to pre-Wagnerian methods of composition. At all events, a work like Berg’s *Wozzeck* already derives some of its intensity and perfection of dramatic timing from the composer’s adherence to strict symphonic forms in the composition of each scene. But even in this case, and in others similar to it, the change applies only to the arrangement of the units; there is no question of going back on arioso as the fundamental stuff of operatic music. The recent vogue of ‘symphonic’ ballet is really an extension of Wagnerian methods of musical continuity to dance sequences. The elaborately dovetailed groupings invented by

Massine for ballets like *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Choreatrium* bear the same relation to the discreet movements of classical ballet as arioso does to the older operatic units.

In another fruit of the romantic spirit in music—the symphonic poem—composers have been a good deal less successful in dealing with the problem of specious time than they were in the case of opera. Early experimenters like Berlioz and Liszt did not incur the same risks as later composers in the genre, if only because they confined themselves to a vaguer programme. When it came to telling a story, the case was altered, as some of us know who have attempted to follow Mrs. Rosa Newmatch's analysis of a piece of programme music while the work was in actual progress. We would still be awaiting the 'plaintive oboe phrase' that (we were told) ushered in the lovesick maiden, when the whole work came to an end, leaving us with the rest of the story on our hands. The fault here was not so much with Mrs. Newmatch, whose analysis was correct as far as it went, but with the composer, who had neglected to time the sections of his music so that their duration would correspond with the specious time required by their emotional content.

Most musicians nowadays regard this kind of music as in any case an aberration, and they are probably right in doing so. Its interest in this context, however, is not in its alleged violence to the spirit of the art, but the very extent to which conscious poetry may mislead a composer in the handling of form. Nor is an elaborate plot necessary to this kind of failure; any definite sequence of contrasted emotions is a high test, in which only the greatest composers invariably succeed. It takes a Bach or a Chopin to pack into a two-page fugue or a serious mazurka an emotional context of symphonic extent, while no amount of melodic invention or incidental beauty has ever been able to make me feel the length of an entire Schumann symphony as equal to more than one stanza of a simple lyric.

I have devoted a good deal of space to this intricate and abstruse problem, not only because it is of first importance in musical criticism, but because I feel that while inattention to it has been responsible for much that is unsatisfactory in modern music, critics have on the whole been inclined to attribute this entirely to melodic or harmonic ineptitudes—an attitude which, if justified, is inexhaustive. A great deal of music since Wagner has been criticised for excessive length, but without asking *why* it seems too long; on the other hand, few people have been found to complain of other pieces that they were too short. Yet if the one reproach is especially applicable to romantic music, the other is equally the besetting sin of the classical reaction. Who has not felt

Prosper Mérimée's handling of some of his short stories was terse to the point of imponderability? I, for one, have had the same sense of unsuitable brevity in listening to some of the movements in Stravinsky's later works, to the first five Piano Sonatas of Prokofieff, and—quite recently—to the slow movement of Howard Ferguson's fine Piano Sonata. In all these cases, the error, it seems to me, is fundamentally a miscalculation of the specious time inherent in the material, though it is natural that skimpiness should escape censure where nimety does not, since boredom is more seriously involved in the second than in the first.

What can usefully be said about a picture or a piece of music always breaks off short at the actual contemplation, during which the whole range of impressions, values, beauties, is received by the spirit. It is these moments that criticism ceases. One would take it all the way, if one could, for complete illumination. But the sight, or sound or whatever, fills the mind to the exclusion of exegetical processes; and what is recalled is misleading. This fact is especially true of musical appreciation, since the impact of sound on the nerves is more immediately poignant than that of diffused light; and it is only when we come to reflect upon the quality of this impact that we can realise the *order* of art to which music belongs. This order is the rhetorical, and something inheres in this statement other than the sense in which all art partakes of rhetoric in its attempt to persuade the mind through the senses. That something is the emergence of music from its original association with the voice, which used its various registers to reinforce the effect of words. The accented words would tend to be pushed out into either the top or the bottom of the whole range of utterable sounds, while the other words would move about round the centre according to their relative importance in the context of the sentence. In this way the status of the vocables composing a sentence, rhetorically delivered, will gradually have approached nearer and nearer to that of musical sounds: so that the final result could be considered as a rudimentary melody. It is when this stage is reached that music detaches itself from words as an independent form of rhetoric, while retaining the basic pretensions of that order. But it is the moment of severance that counts; at this moment—when the irregular harmonics of mere sound become focused into the orderly harmonics of music—an imponderable makes its appearance. In the dark sky of the brain the graph of stars begins to prick, and we are persuaded of a truth.

The rhetoric of music is one of images, never of ideas; the world of music is purely a world of emotion. But emotion in art is a specimen of eternity and so is as different from emotion in life as a phrase sung is

different from a phrase spoken. It follows, then, that we should expect, and find, in music emotional images and combinations which simply do not occur at all outside the art. As Bergson has it: 'They (the emotions we discover in music) have not been drawn from life by art; rather is it we who, in order to describe them in words, are obliged to translate the feelings created by the artist by those which, in life, resemble them most nearly.'

This is not a paradox, as a comparison with other arts will show. The idealised figures of Renaissance painting, the abstractions of Picasso and Paul Klee and Henry Moore, the juxtapositions of surrealism, the distortions of Graham Sutherland, evoke emotional responses as unique as those evoked by music and at some removes from any feeling that would be appropriate to the natural objects upon which they are comments. And even in poetry, which deals in the very stuff of verbal communication, there are esoteric instances—Milton, Mallarmé, Nerval, Coleridge (*Kubla Khan*), Valéry, Gerard Manley Hopkins—which create new aggregates of feeling unsusceptible of a final analysis. If it were merely a case of finding a set of symbols to express the artistic experience of a 'thing', then the two halves of the resulting image would remain for ever separate and thoroughly describable. But this is not what happens. The creative process involves the initial destruction, within ourselves, of the object, which is thereupon rebuilt according to the (essentially mysterious) laws of the medium chosen. The landscape is dissolved into pigment, the story into a pattern of words, the sequence of emotions into musical language; and dissolution implies chemical change.

The final result, then—the work of art—possesses an independent kind of truth, of which the beholder is persuaded (i.e. by the rhetoric of artistic method). This truth is rooted in the essential unity of all *percepta*. The stuff of Nature is homogeneous, at least as far as the human senses go. To take a very simple example: the surface of anything, when subjected to various kinds of pressure, tends to behave in the same way; thus materials as apparently diverse as water, smoke, metal, skin and smooth bark, can all be *crinkled* in a manner that in each case reminds us of the others. This ability to perceive unity in diversity is one of the chief sources of beauty, and to be constantly aware of it is constantly to increase the vocabulary of art.

Such considerations may seem remote from music. But in fact the transformation of Nature into harmonious and schematic sound is different only in degree from that practised by other arts. Music is, inescapably, a description of Man in Nature, and it is part of the business of criticism to establish the connection and interpret the language

used. The mathematical basis of music is technical only; taken as a plea for regarding finished compositions as 'pure', in the sense of being 'unconnected with other systems of sensuous imagery', the term is abusive. The difficulty of musical criticism lies in an adequate appreciation of the extent to which a composer has succeeded in integrating vision and idiom. Technical criticism is the beginning, not the end, of a much wider subject.

## *Assault Convoy*

How quietly they push the flat sea from them,  
Shadows against the night, that grow to meet us  
And fade back slowly to our zig-zag rhythm—  
The silent pattern dim destroyers weave.  
The first light greets them friendly; pasteboard ships  
Erect in lineless mists of sky and sea.  
A low sun lingers on the well-known outlines  
That take new beauty from this sombre war-paint;  
Familiar names trail childish memories  
Of peace time ports and waving, gay departures.

Only at intervals the truth breaks on us  
Like catspaws, ruffling these quiet waters.  
Our future is unreal, a thing to read of  
Later; a chapter in a history book.  
We cannot see the beaches where the dead  
Must fall before this waxing moon is full;  
The tracer-vaulted sky, the guns' confusion,  
Searchlights and shouted orders, sweaty fumbling  
As landing craft are lowered; the holocaust  
Grenade and bayonet will build upon these beaches.

We are dead, numbed, atrophied, sunk in the swamps of war.  
Each of those thousands is a life entire.  
No skilful simile can hide their sheer humanity.  
Across the narrowing seas our enemies wait,  
Each man the centre of his darkening world;  
Bound, as we are, by humanity's traces of sorrow  
To anxious women, alone in the menacing night,  
Where the rhythm of Europe is lost in their private fear  
And El Dorado cannot staunch their grief.

NORMAN HAMPSON

## *The Green Hills of Africa*

The green, humped, wrinkled hills: with such a look  
 Of age (or is it youth?) as to erect the hair.  
 They crouch above the ports or on the plain,  
 Under the matchless skies; are like the offered  
 Shoulders of a girl you only half know.  
 What covers them so softly, vividly?  
 They break at the sea in a cliff, a mouth of red:  
 Upon the plain they are unapproachable,  
 So massive, furrowed, so dramatically lit.

Can you be much surprised at what the hills  
 Contain? The girls run up the slope,  
 Their oiled and shaven heads like caramels.  
 Behind them is the village, its corrugated  
 Iron and, like a wicked habit, the store.  
 The villagers cough, the sacking blows from the naked  
 Skin of a child, a white scum on his lips.  
 The youths come down in feathers from the summit.  
 And over them all a gigantic frescoed sky.

The murder done by infinitesimal doses.  
 The victim weaker and weaker, but uncomplaining.  
 Soon they will only dance for money, they'll  
 Discover more and more things can be sold.  
 What gods did you expect to find here, with  
 What healing powers? What subtle ways of life?  
 No, there is nothing but the forms and colours,  
 And the emotion brought from a world already  
 Dying of what starts to infect the hills.

ROY FULLER

## *Defensive Position*

Cupping her chin and lying there, the Bren  
 Watches us make her bed the way a queen  
 Might watch her slaves. The eyes of a machine,  
 Like those of certain women, now and then

Put an unsettling influence on men  
 Making them suddenly feel how they are seen:  
 Full too many purposes, hung between  
 Impulse and impulse like a child of ten.

The careless challenge, issued so off-handed,  
 Seems like to go unanswered by default—  
 A strong position, small but not commanded  
 By other heights, compels direct assault.

The gunner twitches, and unreprimanded  
 Eases two tensions, running home the bolt.

JOHN MANIFOLD

## *Machine Shop: Night Shift*

The night roars in these walls  
 And screams in steel,  
 For we are midwives of a queer nativity,  
 And in the quiet night outside  
 Hear our winged children drone across the moon.

Death is our child; yet more than death; we've known  
 These walls stand gaunt against the burning city,  
 We have crouched down, the pounding of our hearts  
 Drowned by the hate of slaves of a machine;  
 We stood again; our hate was born of pity;

For you must know with us, that ultimately  
 Machines are our servants,  
 Now our child  
 Grows big and overdue; our Liberty  
 Moans in this metal, aches for action's day,  
 Ready to leap, full-armed, into the fray.

MILES CARPENTER

*Alamein*

There are flowers now, they say, at Alamein  
Yes, flowers in the minefields now.  
So the curious that pass that battle scene,  
Going where death and glory both have been  
Will find the lilies grow—  
Flowers, and nothing that we knew.

So they rang the bells for us and Alamein,  
The bells we could not hear;  
And to those who heard the bells what could it mean?  
This name of tears and pride, this Alamein?  
Not the sand and smoke of war,  
But their love, their own hearts' prayer.

They will make of it a high memorial name,  
That fog and sea of sand!—  
Like Troy or Agincourt its single name  
Will be the garland for our brow, our claim,  
On us a mark of glory to the end,  
And by our dead it will be hallowed ground.

But we will not find the place that we recall,  
The crowded desert crossed with dusty tracks,  
The sand that rolled dense dust-clouds over all,  
The tanks, the guns, the trucks,  
The black, dark-smoking wrecks.

Let it be, none but ourselves can know that land:  
El Alamein will still be only ours  
And those ten days amid the raving sand  
Others will come who cannot understand,  
Will halt beside the rusty minefield wires  
And find there—flowers.

JOHN JARMAIN

*Christ Walking on the Water*

Slowly, O so slowly, longing rose up  
In the forenoon of his face, till only  
A ringlet of fog lingered round his loins;  
And fast he went down beaches all weeping  
With weed, and waded out. Twelve tall waves  
Sequent and equated, hollowed and followed.  
O what a cock-eyed sea he walked on,  
What poke-ends of foam, what elbowings  
And lugubrious looks, what ebullient  
And contumacious musics. Always there were  
Hills and holes, pills and poles, a wavy wall  
And bucking ribbon caterpillaring past  
With glossy ease. And often, as he walked,  
The slow curtains of swell swung open and showed,  
Miles and miles away, the bottle-boat  
Flung on one wavering frond of froth that fell  
Knee-deep and heaved thigh-high. In his forward face  
No cave of afterthought opened; to this ear  
No bottom clamour climbed up; nothing blinked.  
For he was the horizon, he the hub,  
Both bone and flesh, finger and ring of all  
This clangorous sea. Docile, at his toe's touch,  
Each tottering dot stood roundaboutly calm  
And jammed the following others fast as stone.  
The ironical wave smoothed itself out  
To meet him, and the mocking hollow  
Hooped its back for his feet. A spine of light  
Sniggered on the knobbly water, ahead.  
But he like a lover, caught up,  
Pushed past all wrigglings and remonstrances  
And entered the rolling belly of the boat  
That shuddered and lay still. And he lay there  
Emptied of his errand, oozing still. Slowly  
The misted mirror of his eyes grew clear  
And cold, the bell of blood tolled lower,  
And bright before his sight the ocean bared  
And rolled its horrible bold eye-balls endlessly  
In round rebuke. Looking over the edge  
He shivered. Was this the way he had come?

Was that the one who came? The backward bowl  
 And all the bubble-pit that he had walked on  
 Burst like a plate into purposelessness.  
 All, all was gone, the fervour and the froth  
 Of confidence, and flat as water was  
 The sad and glassy round. Somewhere, then,  
 A tiny flute sounded, O so lonely.  
 A ring of birds rose up and wound away  
 Into nothingness. Beyond himself he saw  
 The settled steeples, and breathing beaches  
 Running with people. But he,  
 He was custodian to nothing now,  
 And boneless as an empty sleeve hung down.  
 Down from crowned noon to cambered evening  
 He fell, fell, from white to amber, till night  
 Slid over him like an eyelid. And he,  
 His knees drawn up, his head dropped deep,  
 Curled like a question-mark, asleep.

W. R. RODGERS

### *For a Defeated Fighter*

Up the straight stair  
 And into the room I knew.  
 (How the air,  
 Damp as an aunts' kiss,  
 Pushed me back)  
 I stood against the door  
 With the dusty blue  
 Hangings rubbing my hair.

There was strong coffee  
 Burning in the grate  
 (To take away, she said,  
 The smell of the dead.)  
 But I knew the arum lilies  
 And the breath  
 Of hungry neighbours and the Priest.  
 I knew the corrupt sweetness  
 Of lavender and the grease  
 Of blown-out candles.  
 Too well I know the persuasive revulsion of death.

He lay in the pale coffin  
 High on the many-mattressed bed.  
 I could find no word  
 Of consolation. In my head  
 Ran mad irrelevancies.  
 Like a snapped shoe-lace, perversely frayed,  
 My shaggy thoughts refused  
 To fit into expression's eyelet-hole.  
 Could I have said:  
 'I too have played the undertaker  
 And recall  
 The home-made hearse that sanctified the mole,  
 The chocolate box I used  
 Enlined with paper lace?'

Oh inarticulate stander-by  
 With swollen face  
 Of nicely simulated grief.  
 This is no time for candle symbolism  
 Or 'fiat voluntar tua' on the tomb.  
 Unwind your wreath  
 And superannuate Gothic stonemason—  
 No cryptic epitaph encised with local tools  
 Reveals this life.  
 Rather is corpse itself epitome;  
 This room a cosmos is,  
 Bed universal bier.

MICHAL JAMES

## *Elegy in a Town Churchyard*

It stands aloof in its own green yard, the church,  
 On rich earth crowded thick with jostling corpses.  
 An old and beautiful church; it is a pity  
 These once green fields are fouled with the draggling skirts of the  
 city—  
 Long winding trails of road that prowl and prowl round  
 And the glum houses that glower and tell no tales.

Within, strong pillars raise their heads and sing  
 Stone anthems; and a brazen eagle lifts  
 Upon broad wings the printed Word of God.  
 In the great window over the altar spattered with sunlight  
 A languid Christ hangs, like ripe fruit, in torment from the Tree,  
 While Angels stand around and gape in vitreous ecstasy.

Outside among the grass—stones, only old stones;  
 ‘In Loving Memory’ of what?—a heap of clay-soured bones.  
 But the moss, more kindly, covers up the names,  
 Smoothing the agony of wakeful deathlessness.

Only the War Memorial stands, four-square and white and scrubbed,  
 And black names like long lines of ants climbing a tree.  
 Whose wounded bark oozes syrup, plain for all to see;  
 And here they hang yearly wreaths of paper poppies  
 From whose crisp petals no opiate ever distilled.

All around, hard roadways continually chafe the lurching feet  
 But after bare boards and sleepless mattresses  
 All come here at last. We have built a beautiful house for the Dead,  
 And here their bed is soft in mould and green-quilted.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

## *Cricket at Worcester: 1938*

Dozing in deck-chair’s gentle curve,  
 Through half-closed eyes I watched the cricket,  
 Knowing the sporting press would say  
 ‘Perks bowled well on a perfect wicket’.

Fierce mid-day sun upon the ground;  
 Through heat-haze came the hollow sound  
 Of wary bat on ball, to pound  
 The devil out of it, quell its bound.

Sunburned fieldsmen, flannelled cream  
 Seemed, though urgent, scarce alive,  
 Swooped, like swallows of a dream,  
 On skimming fly, the hard-hit drive.

Beyond the score-box, through the trees  
 Gleamed Severn, blue and wide,  
 Where oarsmen 'feathered' with polished ease  
 And passed in gentle glide.

The back-cloth, setting off the setting,  
 Peter's cathedral soared,  
 Rich of shade and fine of fretting  
 Like cut and painted board.

To the cathedral, close for shelter  
 Huddled houses, bent and slim,  
 Some tall, some short, all helter-skelter,  
 Like a sky-line drawn for Grimm.

This the fanciful engraver might  
 In his creative dream have seen,  
 Here, framed by summer's glaring light,  
 Grey stone, majestic over green.

Closer, the bowler's arm swept down,  
 The ball swung, swerved and darted,  
 Stump and bail flashed and flew;  
 The batsman pensively departed.

Like rattle of dry seeds in pods  
 The warm crowd faintly clapped,  
 The boys who came to watch their gods,  
 The tired old men who napped.

The members sat in their strong deck-chairs  
 And sometimes glanced at the play,  
 They smoked, and talked of stocks and shares,  
 And the bar stayed open all day.

JOHN ARLOTT

### *Out of the Hills*

Dreams clustering thick on his sallow skull,  
 Dark as curls, he comes, ambling with his cattle  
 From the starved pastures. He has shaken from off his shoulders  
 The weight of the sky, and the lash of the wind's sharpness  
 Is healing already under the medicinal sun.

Clouds of cattle-breath, making the air heady,  
 Remember the summer's sweetness; the wet road runs  
 Blue as a river before him. The legendary town  
 Dreams of his coming; under the half-closed lids  
 Of the indolent shops sleep dawdles, emptying the last  
 Tankards of darkness, before the officious light  
 Bundles it up the chimney out of sight.

The shadow of the mountain dwindleth; his scaly eye  
 Sloughs its cold care and glitters; the day is his  
 To dabble a finger in, and, merry as crickets,  
 A chorus of coins sings in his tattered pockets.  
 Shall we follow him down, witness his swift undoing  
 In the indifferent streets, the sudden disintegration  
 Of his soul's hardness; traditional discipline  
 Of flint and frost thawing in ludicrous showers  
 Of maudlin laughter; the limpid runnels of speech  
 Sullied and slurred, as the beer glass chimes the hours?  
 No, wait for him here; At midnight he will return,  
 Threading the tunnel that contains the dawn  
 Of all his fears. Be then his finger-post  
 Homeward. The earth is patient; he is not lost.

R. S. THOMAS

## *London Welsh*

We have scratched our names in the London dust,  
 Sung sometimes like the Jews of Babylon  
 Under the dusty trees of Hyde Park Corner,  
 Almost believing in a Jesus of Cardigan  
 Or a Moses on the mountains of Merioneth;  
 We have dreamed by the Thames of Towy and Dee,  
 And whistled in dairy shops in the morning,  
 Whistled of Harlech and Aberdovey.  
 We have grown sentimental in London  
 Over things that we smiled at in Wales.  
 Sometimes in Woolwich we have seen the mining valleys  
 More beautiful than we ever saw them with our eyes.  
 We have carried our accents into Westminster  
 As soldiers carry rifles into the wars;

We have carried our idioms into Piccadilly,  
 Food for the critics on Saturday night.  
 We have played dominoes in Lambeth with Alfred the Great,  
 And lifted a glass with Henry VIII  
 In the tavern under the railway bridge  
 On Friday nights in winter;  
 And we have argued with Chaucer down the Old Kent Road  
 On the englynion of the Eisteddfod.  
 We have also shivered by the Thames in the night  
 And known that the frost has no racial distinctions.

IDRIS DAVIES

### *Why Weavers Object*

The shuttle went weaving efficiently on and  
 'Ha!' said the thread as it entered the shuttle  
 'Now I'm alive and important!' the shuttle  
 Went weaving efficiently on and the thread  
 Was tossed in the shuttle and tossed in the shuttle  
 Until it was firm in the cloth and the shuttle  
 Went weaving efficiently on and the next  
 Thread that came on to the shuttle said 'Ha!  
 Now I'm alive and important!' the shuttle  
 Went weaving efficiently on and the  
 Shuttle went weaving efficiently on and  
 'Ha!' said the thread as it entered the shuttle.

THEODORE SPENCER

### *Death of the Cathedral*

What came to us in stone,  
 when it kneels with battered  
 towers and the high cock lies  
 down to the crowns, storm on dust,  
 and the sad windmill-arms of God  
 extinguish the light and the text  
 which the mossy hand of the hundred years

has hidden as a rare thought,  
suddenly forced open, stares  
into the night. . . . And the shepherds' angel  
for ever retraces the holy contours,  
invisible to men, music of stars.

But we, when we awaken from our sleep,  
who then knows the word we had forgotten  
when suddenly in this flood we were drowned?  
Where the grass, where the apple's purity,  
where the storm that reigned in the forests,  
where now the good rain, as we  
sink forward and the fingers are wiry  
and pierce the fruit, and the sharp  
hairs know not what used to be and no-one  
digs for the noble pitchers and no-one  
builds tables, and we cower on the iron  
scaffolding, at giddy heights, and fall  
into the cloud speechless. The word burnt away  
with the wood, the tears and the misdeed.

FRED MARNAU

## *The Island*

This island is the world's end. Beyond  
the wide Atlantic drives its thunderous tides  
backwards and forwards, beating on the land  
time out of mind, a hammer on the heart,  
and the storms of the west race from the huge  
infinity of sea, gathering anger,  
and split their bellies and their fist of rage  
against the island's shattered, silent mountain.

The puffins and the rabbits own the land  
and the full and the circling ravenous eagle  
and the seals bark on the edge of the sound  
between the black rocks where the sea beats.  
Where man trod once and wore the hard earth bare  
the green illimitable grass  
creeps back, over the garden and the gear  
that fished the sea and farmed the ungenerous soil.

A lizard by a loosened door  
 peers into an abandoned room,  
 twisting his nostrils to the mummied air  
 that bore the shape of words, a cradle tale,  
 or some young girl's fresh, careless, idle song:  
 the sea wind and the subtle rain  
 break down all things at last, even the strong  
 stone of the wall, and the stubborn heart.

And yet they loved this island. Its hard rock  
 became their bone, its meagre earth their flesh,  
 the sea their tide of blood; and in the black  
 night they turned its sullenness to song.  
 The dancing foot that stirred the scattered sand  
 is quiet now or heavy overseas  
 and the singing voice has only songs that wound  
 with bitterness. The land is dead.

SEAN JENNETT

## *We'll be Coming Down the Mountain*

'I'm going down', she said, tying her yellow scarf,  
 While I still watched the dull grey mountain road  
 Mooch down into the glen and disappear  
 Round a curve of trees and cottages. Some sudden fear  
 Made me not reply, or make any attempt to start  
 Yet awhile; I sat on the old sacrificial stone

To which we had climbed, all the hot morning, together  
 Choosing the difficult way, along the dried-up river bed  
 Choked with dead boulders covered with a fur of spruce leaves.  
 Not even the sacrifice of our youth—made at noon—redeems  
 The swinging boughs of our minds, gay with feathers,  
 Lopped from us now. 'I'm going down', she said.

Her teeth were hedges of dense white sloe blossom,  
Her hair a development of black. Down the afternoon,  
From the rare peak of youth, too, we are going, to the valley  
Of age, lurching and stumbling down its gothic alleys  
And grotesque approaches. 'I'm going down.' The gossip  
Of the wind in her hair will be stopped much too soon.

VALENTIN IREMONGER

### *Caught*

Everywhere, cold as neglected bones on Northern hills,  
Wet as boots in bogs whose spore sponge squelches,  
Brilliant as the half-lit glimmer spraying neutral Dublin,  
Cold and wet and brilliant she follows after everywhere...  
Lost in the deserted grasses swift flies the wish  
To melt apart those unimpassioned eyes and stabbing lips,  
To lose my own identity and stride anonymous  
Through the spiral mist on mountain belly,  
Where I could be more glad than lucid stream  
Serenely walking free to ocean's tomb.  
But wishing is not making, is hardly hopeful,  
Finding her shadow running even into my stillnesses....  
O there's no holiday from love's white raging wheel!

ROBERT GREACEN

*Richard Hillary*

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

I have been reading *The Last Enemy*, by Richard Hillary. It is the most famous book that has come out of the war. Perhaps I ought to have read it before. All I knew of Hillary was an excerpt from one of his last letters which was printed in *The Times*, probably following his death in January, 1943. It struck straightaway in my mind as significant.

Hillary's book is the work of a writer born: it depicts, with remarkable vividness and objectivity the experience of an Oxford undergraduate turned airman, who crashed, was terribly burned, was patched up into the semblance of a human being by plastic surgery, and could not rest till he was flying again to a death which he knew to be certain, and which he desired. Of this latter part of the story *The Last Enemy* tells nothing. To that extent the book is an artefact. Were we to trust it alone we might be persuaded into believing in the triumphant emergence of Hillary from a spiritual crisis, in which his radical scepticism was changed into a faith.

The book represents Hillary as converted to the creed of his friend Peter Pease—also killed as a fighting pilot—whose faith he had tried in vain to undermine by his own scepticism. Hillary's relation with Peter was so intimate that, in hospital under an anaesthetic, he had a vision of his friend's death, apparently more or less at the moment when it happened. The book ends with the spiritual triumph of Peter in Hillary's soul.

'So Peter had been right. It was impossible to look only to oneself, to take from life and not to give except by accident, deliberately to look at humanity and then pass by on the other side.'

But what could he do? It comes to him suddenly. He would write of his dead friends. He was 'the last of the long-haired boys'—a group of undergraduates who had gone, one by one, to their deaths in the battle of Britain.

'If I could do this thing, could tell a little of the lives of these men, I would have justified, at least in some measure, my right to fellowship with my dead, and to the friendship of those with steadfastness and courage who were still living and who would go on fighting until the ideals for which their comrades had died were stamped for ever on the future of civilisation.'

It is an ungrateful task to be sceptical about such a declaration. Nevertheless it must be said plainly that it does not convince. The

speech betrays him. In these latter portions of the book Hillary's style suddenly fails him. It becomes rhetorical and almost commonplace. The spiritual thread is broken. No doubt he did desire to commemorate his friends, and he did so, most memorably. But when he was doing that, he did not present them crowned with this halo of idealism: and it will not work retrospectively. Hillary—it is no moral criticism—is faking something. Artistically, he is forcing the note in order to give his record a significance different from that which is really its own.

He was a born writer, and now he had something to write about, and time in which to do it. It would be a long while before that patched-up body would be fit to seek its Nirvana in an aeroplane again. He had crashed on September 3, 1940. It was more than two years later that he wrote (in a letter of December 1, 1942):

It's curious psychologically that I have only to step into an aeroplane—that monstrous thing of iron and steel just waiting to down me—and all fear goes. I am at peace again.'

Meanwhile, a subaltern peace of self-forgetfulness was to be had in the act of writing. That would do for an explanation; and it would be a truer one than Hillary gave.

Why did Hillary fake the record? Here is ground that angels fear to tread. That the recond is faked admits of no doubt whatever. The internal evidence of the writing and the evidence of his own subsequent letters is at one and incontrovertible. Hillary did not go up into the air again, to a death which he knew to be certain, in order to help to stamp certain ideals for ever on the future of civilisation. Neither did he write his book to commemorate men who believed that that was why they fought and died.

Finally, I got so sick of the sop about our "Island Fortress" and "The Knights of the Air" that I determined to write it anyway in the hope that the next generation might realise that while stupid, we were not that stupid, that we could remember only too well that all this had been seen in the last war, and that in spite of that and not because of it, we still thought this one worth fighting.'

*The Last Enemy* took the shape it has because Hillary, for some reason, wanted to present himself as a man who had changed—been indeed converted—into one who 'still thought this war worth fighting'. It was not true. Why did he do it?

It is not entirely impossible that there was a tinge almost of cynicism in this resolve: a momentary assumption of the role of the hard-boiled writer who knows what is expected of him. That would not conflict with what I feel to have been his deeper motive—a fear of coming truly to grips with the unknown power that impelled him to find his peace

in death. He was, after all, only filling in the time of waiting while writing his book. He had done his best to make it popular; he had succeeded. But as the price of such a success he had given himself a part to sustain. After writing *The Last Enemy* it would hardly have been possible, hardly spiritually decent, to have relapsed into the arm-chair of a professional author.

Had he not given that twist to his story the sequel might have been different. It would have been possible for Hillary to have survived (one feels) if he had not published *The Last Enemy*, or if he had written if differently. Had the story been carried through to the bitter end on the same plane of sheer veracity on which the greater part was written it would have imposed upon him no obligation to so bleak a destiny. He had forced the note as artist; now he was doomed to force it as man. There was no earthly, and not much heavenly, good to be gained by his going back to the R.A.F. He knew, perfectly well, that the chances of his being an effective fighter again were negligible. *Mais quoi faire?* As Arthur Koestler, who was his friend, put it in a penetrating essay, 'The myth was devouring the man.'

But what would it have been—the book which Hillary did not write: the book which he half-wrote, then screwed to a heroic pitch, which belied his own experience; the book which would have dealt with his own inward change—for change there surely was—as honestly as it had dealt with what had come to him before the change? To conjecture that were to conjecture what song the sirens sang. For the change itself was now to be conditioned irrevocably by his adoption of a role—'the last of the long-haired boys' who stays awhile only to commemorate his dead friends, and to be converted to the creed which the public is made happy to believe they professed; then hastens to join them.

That role, indeed, Hillary could not play. His integrity was much too real for that. But the end was appointed. There was no escape from death. One cannot, at twenty-three, look forward to a life that is one long anti-climax. The penalty for dramatising your own life, when you have a Hillary's sense of decorum, was the inexorable necessity of the fifth act. The horror, the pathos, the new and terrible beauty, is that the fifth act had not to be written, but lived.

Hillary's letters, which I have read only in the excerpts which Arthur Koestler gives, are the record of the man facing the inevitability of death to which he has condemned himself as a tragic hero. They are terrifying letters, in which we watch him groping after his own motive. Why is he being impelled to die? Is it vanity, he once asks himself. He hesitates, and answers 'No'. That was true: it was not vanity. But the reason he gives why it was not vanity is untrue. 'Because implicit in

my decision was the acceptance of the fact that I shall not come through.' One can seek death through vanity. But the sense of decorum is not vanity. Cleopatra's

‘And then what’s brave, what’s noble  
Let’s do it after the high Roman fashion  
And make death proud to take us’

is not vanity. But Hillary was not a character in a tragedy. And yet he was. He had made a tragic hero of himself; but it was Richard Hillary who had to fill and pay the bill.

The sense of decorum, in Hillary, was now complicated. Nothing so simple as Hillary living, or dying, up to his part. The man of exquisite integrity, entangled in a necessity imposed upon him by his art. That would be complex enough. But it was not so simple even as that. The necessity was imposed upon him by a failure of integrity in his art. Too simple still. That failure of integrity, that forcing of the note, was in the last analysis, only the desperate grasp at a faith which did not involve, for him, intellectual or moral suicide.

Only he had to snatch at it, all the same. It had seemed to be there. There had been a moment of vision—of some kind. But he had magnified it, interpreted it, connected it, used it to pattern his book, and thence himself. And then the pattern did not fit, after all. He had connived at his own conviction; adopted a meaning for himself, when deep down he knew his only meaning was himself. And now, by snatching at a meaning, he had lost himself.

Was it indeed any essential part of his own pattern that he now had to die? How could he say? How can we say? That he had to die was certain. He had lured himself into a position in which it was no longer possible for him to live. By snatching at a meaning, he had projected himself into a world which was governed by the laws of tragedy. But tragedy as conceived by the disillusioned and reticent youth of the ruling class of the Munich age,—a tragedy of understatement, of the minor role; of the man who has his faith as it were at second-hand, in the form of love and admiration and envy for those who have a faith he cannot share; of the man who puts meaning into his own life by insisting on a meaning in the deaths of his friends.

But the real tragedy, that which awakens in us thoughts beyond the reach of our soul, is that of the Hillary who shrinks not so much from death as from his submission to the necessity imposed upon him by his own self-deception, who has no name and no love for the power which drives him on. It is, he says sometimes, instinct. But it is not instinct. It may be instinct which drives the singed moth back into the bright

incandescence. But Hillary was not a moth. He was a finely-conscious contemporary human being.

What compelled him to death? We have said a sense of decorum. That comes nearer to the mark. But the phrase is ancient now. The decorum of 1942 is a very different thing from the decorum of a century ago. Hillary's is the decorum of an age of total war. The English obverse of the medal whose German reverse carries the picture of the young Nazis in April, 1940, flinging themselves deliberately to death in the advance upon Dethel. That was a portent; so was its counterpart, Hillary's death.

What is this new sense of the decorum of total war, as manifest in Richard Hillary? We may find the roots of it in his picture of his generation.

'We were disillusioned and spoiled. . . . Superficially we were selfish and egocentric without any Holy Grail in which we could lose ourselves. The war provided it, and in a delightfully palatable form. It demanded no heroics but gave us the opportunity to demonstrate in action our dislike of organised emotion and patriotism, the opportunity to prove to ourselves and to the world that our effete veneer was not so deep as our dislike of interference, the opportunity to prove that, undisciplined though we might be, we were a match for Hitler's dogmatised youth.'

Good, one feels. There is decorum here. And had the battle of Britain ended there: fighter pilot against fighter pilot, and the free man triumphant by virtue of his freedom, the decorum might have been manifest at the level of nations.

But the battle of Britain was not the end. This last, consummate achievement of the British genius for improvisation and *désinvolture*, perfect had it stood alone, was but a link in a chain, a cog in a mechanism. The glory of fighter-pilot grinds slowly and inexorably down to the shame of Bomber Command. The respite won by the fighter pilots was used to inflict with calculated purpose upon the simple families through the length and breadth of Germany the same obscenity—the blasting of simple families to death in their London homes—which gave Hillary his moment of vision and faith.

The wheel had turned full circle. Truly, there was nothing for a Hillary to do, but die, if he was to remain significant. The necessity was cosmic. In the total story of Hillary the veil is lifted for moments and we glimpse the purposes of God. Hence its power upon us. Hillary did not consciously flee into death from the futile horror to come, for which he and his friends had unwittingly prepared. But he had to be saved from it.

Turn back to the sequence which brought him as an individual under the law of tragedy. The vision which brought him the momentary faith at which he snatched was simply that of a woman killed with her baby in the London blitz. That gave him meaning, and he built the pattern of his book upon it. His dead friends were justified, and so was he. The unworthy element in him and them was burned away, for redemptive action cannot be 'delightfully palatable'. And his integrity was such that not even his terrible experiences in hospital could absolve him from levity at the bar of his own conscience.

The vision of the dead woman did absolve him. To make that thing for ever impossible—that was the Holy Grail. He and his friends were crusaders after all, and he their chronicler.

And yet and yet. Somehow he could not quite believe it; he could not go on believing it. And it was not true. It might have been true, had the Battle of Britain been the end. Then he might truly have believed what he desired to believe. But the Battle of Britain was not the end, and *The Last Enemy* was written in the growing awareness that it would not be. The terrible event would dissolve the very foundation of his half-won faith.

He had presented himself to the world as a man who had won through to a knowledge of obligation which set his doubting heart at peace. He was henceforward dedicated to the cause. He knew what he fought for and loved what he knew.

That was the Hillary he gave to the world. But the living, growing, experiencing Hillary came to know different. He had half-known it already. When he returned to the R.A.F. he neither knew what he fought for nor loved what he knew. The real Hillary was doing to the outward eye what the legendary Hillary was pledged to do. But it was no enemy he was seeking, no crusade on which he was flying. He was seeking Death. That which found his friends, he sought. Death was for him the barrier of finality between him and a life of growing and irreparable division, an end to his 'posthumous existence', a surcease from consciousness which would fix him, as it were a fly in amber, outside the stream of time and experience, incorruptible by the future event.

Eric Linklater, in his preface to *The Last Enemy* bears witness to Hillary's austere clarity of purpose, with which (Linklater knew) all dissuasion was incommensurable. The creature had a purpose and his eye was bright with it. The purpose was to be a symbol. Had that become conscious, it could not have been accomplished. Hillary sought to discover why he was impelled towards death—always in vain. We may be wiser than he, but if we are, that is because we are not perfect,

as he was. His was the knowledge that all was torment, and the power to act on the knowledge.

He could not live; he could not have lived. In Hillary's experienced impossibility of living his profound sense that it was unfitting and wrong to live, because by living he must inevitably become less than he was, is the epitaph of our society. Here was a man who participated in Britain's 'finest hour': perhaps the most fully conscious of all those who were the occasion of Churchill's phrase-making, the objects of his rhetoric: 'Never was so much owed by so many to so few.' He was plucked, like a brand from the burning: saved to survive and to be the *vates sacer*. Yet he could not live. He, in whom this society was justified, by whom it was defended, willed not victory, but death: and willed it, impersonally, as one who submits to a meaning, and becomes its vehicle.

In Hillary, the deep urge of contemporary society towards death is made visible. He is the dazzling white of the foam on the great wave of death which D. H. Lawrence prophesied, if it were not forestalled by a wave of generosity. In him generosity itself seeks Death. The irony of his title becomes intolerable. Death was not the last enemy, but the last and only friend.

In Hillary is visible the nature of defeat of life in the world to-day. Embody the virtues of the Englishman in one man, endow him with awareness, give him a perfect part to sustain in the massive drama of total war, put him at the very hinge on which history turns, let him escape death by a miracle, and be restored to life by magic of modern surgery: and he goes bad on you. 'We are fighting for survival', said Churchill in 1940. Hillary is the essence of what survives,—the impossibility of life. What Hillary foreknew as an individual, Britain will discover as a nation.

## *William Blake*

JACK LINDSAY

Blake was born in 1757 and died 1827. His life spanned the crucial years of the Industrial Revolution. In those years there occurred changes comparable in extent and significance only with those of the period when agriculture and its attendant crafts were discovered. Now at last the blind cycles of expansion and collapse could be ended. I mean, there was now at last the basis for an economy of plenty. Now

the dreams of freedom, brotherhood and equality, which had haunted men vainly since the break-up of clan-life, could be brought to earth.

Our forefathers in England, not so long ago, did all that. They swung history for ever out of the blind cycles. And they did it by developing the power-machine and factory-forms of production. But the economic changes had behind them, and in them, the building-up of a truly scientific outlook. All the old Chinese-puzzles, the static schemes of order, in which the universe was conceived as consisting of continually recombined but unvarying elements and forms, were shattered. The real nature of change and development was grasped. The idea of evolution began to invade the attempts at classification in the physical sciences; and soon, under the French Revolution, the increasingly precise work in chemical experiment led to the epochal discovery of what chemical change really was—the way in which certain elements, combined in certain quantities, begot new qualities (i.e. two gases made water).

A radically disturbing force was at work, breaking up all old modes of thought and action. In poetry what we call the Romantic Revival uttered the feeling of tremendous new possibilities opening before men; agonies and aspirations of growth. All the familiar contours of life were being broken up, hovering between chaos and exciting new constructions. Men felt themselves played upon by great new forces of chance and choice, terror and love, freedom and frustration.

For it wasn't all a release from obstructions. These movements, giving men the basis for an escape from their old fears and divisions, were taking place in a class-society. Peace and plenty were now becoming possible; so men were crushed under worse burdens of poverty and violence, wars were no longer waged by a few mercenaries and cut-throats; they became wars of peoples. The new economic formations, massing men more and more efficiently, saw to that. And since the increase in production was serving the needs of profit, it needed ceaseless expansion of capital investment, and so had to intensify exploitation of the working classes.

The vast changes of the eighteenth century had been made possible by village-industry, by the devoted hard work and accumulations of the small producers who found their spiritual expression in dissent. Dissent had been fiercely opposed to Church and State, but had felt itself 'crucified to the world', unable to bring to earth its aspirations towards unity except in the emotional outpourings of the chapel. By their very success in raising the level of production these men destroyed their own basis. Capital flowed decisively for the first time out of trade into industry.

That meant the end of village industry, the craftsman. For the new capital tended to foster all forms that made for a more effective control of worker and work. The factory with its division of labour and integration of process, its direct supervision and its use of power machinery, became the norm of productive life.

So men at last were reaching the stable knowledge and technique for a mastery of nature in science and production. But they were doing it at the cost of turning the mass of the people into wage-slaves divorced from the means of production. In these years, before the people had learned to organise for struggle under industrial conditions, they were almost entirely at the mercy of the employers. The result was an immeasurable brutality of treatment, a terrible endless suffering. We say that, but we hardly realise what we are saying. We feel a wrench of furious anger and pity, and then think of something else. We can't steadily realise the fathomless cruelty, the heavy shapeless pang.

But nowadays it ought to be possible. Think of the Nazi behaviour in Greece and Poland. Think of our own behaviour in India. The ground-down masses in hopeless debt, losing the land or staying on it to starve, driven into factory conditions that bleed life of all meaning and joy, dying in the ditches, desperately seeking to build up their organisation of resistance. Think of India. It will do you good, anyway.

Blake looks steadily at the truth of his world. He never loses faith in the great release of forces making for new harmonies of peace and plenty, brotherhood and love. He never averts his gaze from the dreadful fact of intensified misery, bloodshed, degradation. On the threshold of capitalist industrialism, he sees always the basic dilemma, which has worked out in our own days to its final spacious conclusions of murder and destruction.

Shall not the King call for Famine from the heath,  
 Nor the Priest for Pestilence from the fen,  
 To restrain, to dismay, to thin  
 The inhabitants of mountain and plain,  
 In the day of full-feeding prosperity  
 And the night of delicious songs?  
 Shall not the Counsellor throw his curb  
 Of poverty on the laborious,  
 To fix the price of labour,  
 To invent allegoric riches? . . .

Blake is in many ways the greatest modern poet, because he is the poet of the people in the remorseless grip of industrialism, looking

back to the folk days, but much more urgently looking forwards to the revolution which we now call socialism. That is why it is only of recent years he has found his audience. As imperialism developed, his work attracted attention; but only now, in the last bloody throes of the system, can it be got into focus. A book has just been published which shows Blake as he really was, simply the poet of the masses in that terrific crucible of economic and spiritual change, the Industrial Revolution. (*A Man without a Mask*, by J. Bronowski.)

Blake was a craftsman, an engraver, and lived mostly in dire poverty. His personal story is just that of the craftsman whom the changes were forcing out of economic existence. Other poets expressed pity and indignation at the bad conditions forced on the poor, but did it from the outside. Blake is aware of no separateness. Where man, woman or child suffer, there he suffers. Where the broken and oppressed gather in resistance and strike a blow for brotherhood, there he is fighting. The personal issue is always a part of history. The outrage inflicted on any member of the masses is felt by the body of human unity; it is felt by Blake as an outrage on his own body and soul.

His writings fall into two main divisions. Lyric work of a crystalline simplicity, and prophecies oratorical in method and often highly obscure in idiom. Throughout his life he reacted against all forms and ideas associated with the ruling class, and he built his work on those that seemed to him expressive of revolt and based in the common people. Folk-ballad and dissenting hymn merged in his style. (The long line of prophecies, it has not been noted, starts from the seven-beat line of ballad and hymn.) And he eagerly took up two dissident aspects of contemporary poetry, the Gothic and the Ossianic cults. He loved Gothic because he felt the medieval world as a world of the folk, opposed to his own class-world. And Ossian appealed to him for the same reason, only more so. The Ossianic poems had been fabricated by Macpherson as works of the highland bardic tradition; and despite their tawdriness they did get something strange and wild, moments of haunting free rhythm, and imagery of men merging with the forces of nature. For Blake as for others they thus expressed a pre-class society, heroic and 'natural'—that is, free from the 'artificiality' and 'hypocrisies' which was identified with class-society.

The elemental imagery of Ossian seemed to Blake to give the right idiom to embody his sense of man merging with the new powers that his increased control of nature had released. He began using it to express an anarchist revolt against the oppressive forces of his world, moral and religious. The myth-form attracted him as providing a means for defining the basic patterns of conflict; and the loose rhythms

satisfied his wish to feel himself a speaker calling to men to throw off their fetters and enjoy life in all its fullness. Soon he felt himself drawn to deal directly with the political issues of his day. The French Revolution had begun. His prophecies combined a call to action in support of the revolutionary forces and a poetic exploration of the inner meaning of the conflict. He felt the unity of historical movement between the American and French Revolutions, and the inevitable world-culmination of the forces that had been set into action.

'Shadows of Prophecy shiver along by the lakes and the rivers, and mutter across the ocean: France, rend down thy dungeon....'

But the first simple glee soon went. Bronowski deals at some length with the conditions of savage repression which in England, under Pitt, held down the workers and the intellectuals: and he is right to do so. Unless one realises the desperate conditions under which Blake was writing, one cannot understand the ways in which he evaded the censorship and in which the censorship finally got into his own mind.

His *French Revolution* was set in type by the advanced bookseller John Johnson, but never issued. It was to have appeared at the cheap price of a shilling. The details of its suppression we do not know, but the key is certainly the *Proclamation Against Divers Wicked Seditious Writings of May, 1792*. Paine, whom Johnson published, had to flee to France for a speech to the Friends of the People. (It was Blake who warned him in time.) Thus Blake describes the repression in his *Europe*:

'Every house a den, every man bound: the shadows are fill'd  
With spectres, and the windows wove over with curses of iron;  
Over the doors "Thou shalt not," and over the chimneys "Fear" is  
written:  
With bands of iron round their necks fastened into the walls  
The citizens, in leaden gyves the inhabitants of suburbs  
Walk heavy: soft and bent are the bones of villagers.'

To take one example. Blake wrote notes against a pamphlet by the renegade liberal, Bishop Watson. Wordsworth, at the same time, was writing a bitter attack on the Bishop. Neither Blake nor Wordsworth published. Gilbert Wakefield published a less outright answer to Watson, and went to jail from 1799 to 1801. 'The Beast and the Whore (State and Church) rule without control', Blake had written in his notes. Later, in 1804, he was actually indicted for seditious talk.

In the *French Revolution* Blake stood at a moment of choice. He was using his Ossianic diction to enlarge the historical perspective, his mythical method of approach to make the historical actors representa-

tive of basic causes. He could persist along these lines and fight to make himself the direct epic poet of the Revolution—with the certain result of jail and suppression. Or he could shift his emphasis still more on to the mythical aspects and the psychological action. He took the latter course.

It was a course in one sense dictated by fear. But not only that. Blake with his deep response to the masses was reflecting their own dilemma. His method and imagery is based in the actual historical position. The Revolution itself soon lost its prime unity, its almost elemental drive. Its last great democratic upsurge was the Terror directed against fifth-columnists. (Blake always glorified the Terror in his symbol Orc, and dared to wear the phrygian cap in the London streets.) After that the 'bourgeois' element triumphed; the rule of money tightened. The fight for the future, in France as in England, rested on the slow consolidation of working-class forces.

All these changes are closely and powerfully reflected in Blake's work. He knows the importance of the political struggle; but as poet he is striving to realise the human whole, in which politics are only one aspect. As the direct political struggle for a free society is frustrated and confused, he stubbornly quests about for explanations, for a fuller definition of the issues involved. I shall try to sketch the way in which his work expands.

He begins with a myth-picture of the battle between the forces of good and evil, between the lyric demand for love and happiness and the forces that resist and obstruct. He advances to take in the political aspects. Then he is forced to realise that the political conflict is built on the economic, and that the last word will be said by the great new forces of union and division let loose by the industrial developments. So the fight gets more complicated.

He re-introduces the sex-issue on a new level. No longer content with the simple anarchist attack on Jealousy (which he always identified with property-greed), he sees sex-life as conditioned by the social forces surrounding it, and proceeds to a dramatic definition of sex-conflict as one aspect of the division that only the revolution can heal. Similarly with the whole complex pattern of growth in the individual, the inner conflict which he dramatises in the fight, again half sexual, between Spectre and Emanation. (These are his direct emblems for the basic aspects of the self which fuse and split continually in experience. Where one dominates, the individual regresses. The Spectre makes him self-righteous, opposed to change, cut off from the springs of renewal in common life. The Emanation weakens him into confused fears and pities, secretions and repressions. In the living unity of the self the

Spectre is absorbed into constructive energy; the Emanation becomes a vital sensitivity of response to others.)

Finally, there is the simple organic basis of development. This, too, Blake feels he must embody in his depiction of the whole man. (He had responded strongly to works like Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia*, which expressed the contemporary trend among advanced thinkers towards evolutionary attitudes.)

These few sentences give some faint idea of the task that Blake set himself. He wanted to combine a whole series of concepts of growth within a single poetic definition. The organic and evolutionary; the sexual and individual; the social and historical. To show how one underlies or overlies the other, restlessly separating and combining, and only in the fullness of their conflict and union making up the fullness of human life. He simultaneously shows us the structure of individual experience and the movement of history, the fulfilment of self and the achievement of classless society, the indivisible relation between the struggle for personal wholeness and the struggle for social unity.

All this and more he tried to compass in his poems and prophecies. No wonder that he himself often got confused and lost his way. No wonder that his work has been so misunderstood and considered purely 'mystical', yielding an esoteric secret if one can only find the right tag to tie to the proper names. But once one gets the basic clue—the clear relation of the poems to the world about them, to the moment of history in which each was written—then one can read without much difficulty, even if one knows nothing of the niceties of mysticism. And if one doesn't get that basic clue, one might as well keep on doing crossword puzzles.

The Prophecies fall into two main sections. Those written while the mass forces were dominant in France; those written after reaction began to triumph. Blake, like so many other poets of his day, began to lose his faith in politics, but unlike them he did not retreat into terms with reaction. He became more revolutionary than ever, though his approach was now on the long-distance view. His loss of faith in politics was only a realisation that the revolution was not possible in his own day. From that point he concentrated on the definition of the impasse of the working class in England.

'Wheel without wheel,  
To perplex youth in their outgoings and to bind to labours in Albion  
Of day and night the myriads of eternity: that they may grind  
And polish brass and iron hour after hour, laborious task.  
Kept ignorant of its use: that they might spend the days of wisdom  
In sorrowful drudgery to obtain a scanty pittance of bread.'

Now the elemental imagery is merged with imagery of industrial process. Two images obsess him, the furnace and the loom: the furnaces of the Lancashire iron masters in which life is being transformed with horrible suffering, the looms of Lancashire which weave endless new bonds as well as the texture of liberation.

Terrible is the utterance of pain in these works, the bitter pity for the crucified masses from whom the man of the redeemed life will arise.

'Incessant roars the bellows  
Upon my terribly flaming heart, the molten metal runs  
In channels through my fiery limbs, O love, O pity, O fear,  
O pain....'

But he never hesitates in his belief in the final triumph of the working-class forces: 'the Great Harvest and Vintage of the Nations . . . the Cry of the Poor Man, his Cloud over London in volume terrific, low-beaded in anger.'

It was inevitable that Blake, the poet of revolution, should discover the dialectical logic which Hegel later worked out in abstract detail and Marx concretely applied. Deriving the form of his approach from the alchymists, Blake realised that life is a marriage of contraries, without which 'is no progression', and that 'negations are not contraries: contraries mutually exist'. He denounced the mechanist outlook of his age which he identified with the class-forces of oppression—the 'dull round' of mechanist science he equated with the 'dull round' of the wage-slave. That which breaks the servile repetition is the creative force driving into the future liberation.

Thus, he declares that he never sees life single but always at least two-fold—that is, he never sees anything in isolation but always as a part of a conflict. But that is not enough. He seeks the 'threefold vision'—the new unity which emerges from the conflict. But still that is not enough. 'Fourfold is my supreme delight.' For fourfold reality he identifies with *Jerusalem*, the harmony that arises as the final synthesis of class-conflict in the world-revolution.

This kind of thinking pervades all his work, all his magnificent vision of life.

There then is Blake, the Man without a Mask, the poet whose strange integrity makes him a poet apart, who never even considered the possibility of compromise and who by his imaginative unity with the masses realised the whole epoch of industrialism, its inner meaning and its structure of conflict. I have been able here only to give a few rough indications of the way in which he develops his poetic ideas, but I hope I have suggested something of his importance to us.

Blake comes into his own in our period. But that can only happen truly if we carry on his work. In him we find the reconciliation of the idiom of Dissent, with a dialectical outlook. That is, he takes over the traditional mass-expression of revolt and devotion, and fuses it with a scientific understanding of the structure of movement. There is the clue to the creation of a true English revolutionary art. The discovery of Blake is the first necessary step in the healing of our culture. We cannot take over his method, but the realisation of what he did and how he did it is an essential preliminary for attempting to do in our age what he did in his.

Who is so unresponsive as to be able to read his passionate work, tense with pity and indignation, and not feel how his poetic achievement is bound up with his revolutionary integrity?

'There souls of men are bought and sold,  
And milk-fed infancy for gold,  
And youth to slaughter houses led,  
And beauty for a bit of bread.'

## *Federico García Lorca*

FRANK PIERCE

It would be a curious and interesting study to discover what lies behind literary fashions, for intrinsic worth alone is not enough to cause the wide circulation of a work or set of works throughout Western Europe. Political and social prejudices, as well as temperamental or national tastes, are very strong forces in the popularising of the works of any given writer.

Spain well illustrates this contention. It is not an exaggeration to say that modern Spanish literature for the non-Spaniard and non-Hispanist means at the most the philosophical, aesthetic and sociological works of Unamuno and Ortega Gasset, and (strange bed-fellows for two such intellectuals!) the best-sellers of Blasco Ibañez, who was at once the Jack London and Rafael Sabatini of Spanish-speaking countries. Of late the illustrious and tragic name of García Lorca has been added to these three to complete the layman's knowledge of the present-day literary activity of the land of Cervantes and Calderon. Spanish literature is not the fashion, at least with the well-read English speaker, however great has been the revival of Hispanic studies in schools and universities.

Up to less than two hundred years ago, however, translations of Spanish classics filled the libraries of the man of culture and are still to be found in large numbers in public libraries and collections dating back to the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. For those who then read Spanish, and they were many, the printing presses of Amsterdam, Brussels, Venice and Lyons (not to mention the presses of Spain itself) turned out edition after edition of Spanish classics. But the Spain of those days was the chief political power in Europe and mistress of an empire on which the sun never set. Since then the loss of her political power in the west and of her vast colonial possessions has changed all that. The fortunes of Spain and the favourable circumstances that gave such widespread knowledge of her culture should make the sincere reader cautious of hasty judgment and dissatisfied with general statements about an artist who springs into fame outside his own country because of clearly non-cultural reasons. And this brings us to Garcia Lorca: 1898–1936.

From 1936 to 1939, Spain was torn by civil war, and Lorca's premature death as a victim of that bitter struggle made him, in the minds of people more interested in ideological politics than in literature, the tragic hero of the hour. His works were translated (not an easy task!) and commented on, and his brilliant and finely-chiselled verse taken as the lyrical expression of class-warfare. This view is as unjust and incomplete as that now held about the work of Leo Tolstoy, whom many people have discovered as the writer of the hour. There were many in those years from '36 to '39 who 'knew' their Lorca as they now claim to 'know' their Tolstoy. Let me attempt, if tardily, to correct the then prevalent and erroneous notions about Lorca and set him in the background he belonged to and will ever belong to, as one of Spain's greatest literary figures of the present age.

Any adequate review of the work of Lorca, as, indeed, of that of most of the writers of modern Spain, necessarily leads us back to the movement (Spain rarely if ever, produces literary schools as such) called 'the generation of '98'—that is, 1898, the year when Spain lost her last colonies, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Filipinas, in the Spanish-American War. This was much more than any political movement; indeed, it can safely be asserted that it resulted in a complete spiritual and material regeneration of Spanish life.

The country then ceased to be even nominally an imperial power. What this meant after four hundred years of empire is not easy to describe. The Spaniard who had, with the epic feats of Columbus, Cortés, Pizarro, Magellan and his armies in Europe, become imbued with ideas of power and the mission of ruling vast territories, and in-

flamed with high crusading ideals, who had suffered his first rude disillusionment at the hands of the French armies of the seventeenth century, was now made to realise that his day as an imperialist was past.

It should be understood at this point that the date 1898 does not mark the end of one age and the beginning of another. The movement which now goes under the name of 'the generation of '98' had already had its precursors before that year, but the feeling of finality and as of something which had gone for ever in the life of the country, with the defeats of '98, served to gather up dispersed energies and to awaken new spirits, making of it all what was soon to be a great and revitalising force in every branch of the national life. As if at last released from the sterile and out-moded traditions of a past that was now dead, there arose a new and enthusiastic generation of writers, musicians, painters, scholars, scientists, doctors and social reformers, whose aim was not to turn their backs on the past completely, but to preserve its glorious achievements, cast aside those of its mistakes which still lingered, look around contemporary Europe and learn from it, and, combining both tendencies, peninsular and European, make a revaluation of the Spain that remained.

This critical and optimistic attitude produced trenchant studies of domestic conditions, material, intellectual and religious. A new life was given to the old body and resulted in the slow maturing of a liberal and energetic spirit that was at the same time European and Hispanic. In literature it presents us with a brilliant series of writers who read and re-read the Spanish classics and the new literature of contemporary Europe. The age of uncritical imitation that covered the most of the nineteenth century now gave way to a period of great assimilation and originality, such that the first two decades of this century can be regarded as a renaissance in the arts of Spain.

In prose, the fine feats of intellectual interpretation of Spanish history and tradition that constitute the essays and monographs of Unamuno and Ortega, the delicate stylistic exercises of Azorín, and the novels and short stories of the dour and analytical Basque, Baroja, and the equally satirical and intellectual psychological studies of the Asturian, Pérez de Ayala, stand as excellent examples of the re-birth of Spanish literary talent. They examined the rich and expressive language of all the classics from Sta. Teresa to Cervantes and Quevedo, and read widely in the literatures of England, France, Italy, Germany and Russia. Yeats and Synge were among those known to these omnivorous intellects, and the latter's *Riders to the Sea* was later done into Spanish, as was also Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*. New research

institutes were set up and university education remodelled, while students finished their studies abroad and came back enriched and much more alive to the needs of their country.

This was the *milieu* that Lorca was brought up in. Born in Granada, in 1898, he was educated at the university of that city and at the Residence of Students in Madrid, where he reaped the benefits of the new learning and outlook.

Let us look now at the position of poetry in this revival, for it was in this sphere that he was to shine as one of its brightest lights. Spain had lost her territorial claims on the New World, but it was from there (Nicaragua) that she was to receive the stimulus to regain her long-lost poetical vigour in the person of Rubén Darío. This was the poet who initiated the movement that enriched poetic diction and produced a whole new generation of most competent lyricists and not a few geniuses. Darío literally teemed with lyrical ability, taking from French *symbolisme*, Italian verse of the *fin de siècle*, and the rich Spanish treasures of the past, the stuff that was to make his grandiloquent alexandrines and hendecasyllables—which were full of his American lustiness and delicate but decadent Gallic sentiment and imagery. His life was spent as much in Spain and France as in Spanish America, and he is equally the father of modern poetry in his own continent as he was in Spain. To him and to the fine spirits who followed his lead in Spain, much of the poetic training of Lorca is due. Thus Jiménez passed from the post-romantic sentimentalism of Darío to a more subtle and more Spanish style of his own, and expresses in an exquisite aestheticism the temperament and life of his native Andalusia.

We now return to Lorca. As in the rest of Europe so in Spain, the passing of the first two decades of the twentieth century is marked by a deeper and more conscious feeling for the nuances of words and the whittling away of what now seemed redundancies of metre and images. The flamboyance and effete sentiment of the nineteenth century give way to a more concrete and parsimonious expression. Lorca perhaps achieved the finest results in this process, which in Spanish is called *depuración* and which means the refining of sensibility and expression to a point of more acute and balanced interpretation.

Lorca's first book of poems appeared under the title *Libro de poemas* in 1921, followed by *Canciones* (Songs) in 1927, and in 1928 by his best known and most successful production, *Romancero gitano* (Gypsy Balladbook), which ran into its fourth edition by 1936. His other works include *Oda a Walt Whitman*, Mexico, 1933, a work written on visiting the U.S.A., and, in 1935, his magnificent elegy, in three parts (*Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*), on the death of his

friend, the bullfighter Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, also an artist. He had also to his credit two poetical dramas, in which genre he never reached the heights of his lyrics. These are *Bodas de Sangre* (*Marriage of Blood*) and *Yerma* (*Sterile*), which set out in strong relief the eternal questions of family feuds and sexual impotence.

His works, under the title, *Poems, with English translation*, by Stephen Spender and J. L. Gili, appeared in London in 1939, and give a page to page text and translation of verse that must inevitably lose much in the process, but the vigour and beauty of which can be sufficiently grasped by the sensitive reader.

Those who know Lorca's work will also know that it was as an Andalusian that he wrote and felt, and that it is to his native province that he dedicated his best poetic talents.

Thus we discover one of the main qualities of Lorca, his *andalucismo*. This, however, does not make him any less Spanish or any less European, for the Peninsula has ever been made up of 'small fatherlands', and it is through regional qualities that the artistic greatness of Spain has been achieved. (Velasquez and Murillo were from Seville, Goya from arid Aragón, while Falla hails from Cadiz.) Particularly to his native Granada did he give his keenest and most sincere attention in his verses, to Granada of the gypsies and the memories of Moorish civilisation. (Granada was a Moslem city until 1492.) Moreover, precision of view and exact objectiveness of expression have been the particular traits of Granadine artists. Listen to the finely-balanced rhythm of Lorca:

Por el olivar venian,  
bronce y sueño, los gitanos.  
Las cabezas levantadas  
y los ojos entornados.

(Through the olives rode the gypsies,  
Full of sleep and dark as bronze,  
With their heads held high,  
And their eyes half-closed.)

His delicate yet full-blooded images, couched with a paucity of language and contained emotion, present us with unparalleled vignette of the dramatic and rich land of the south.

Antonia Torres Heredia  
hijo y nieto de Camborios,  
con una vara de mimbre  
va a Sevilla a ver los toros.

Sus empavonados bucles  
le brillan entre los ojos.  
A la mitad del camino  
cortó limones redondos.  
y los fué tirando al agua  
hasta que la puso de oro.

(Antonio Torres Heredia,  
Son and scion of Camborios,  
Wields a stick of good osier,  
On his way to Seville to see the bulls;  
With his finely-combed locks  
That are shining 'twixt his eyes  
Half-way along he cuts round lemons  
And throws them in the stream,  
Till one by one they rise  
And turn it into gold.)

Few poets have had such an alert sense of the wonder of night and its attendant signs as the highly gifted Lorca.

La noche se puso intima  
como una pequeña plaza.

(The night became as intimate  
As a small town square.)

One has to know Spanish towns and their charm fully to appreciate the magnificence of this image. Or,

Y un horizonte de perros  
ladra muy lejos del río.

(And a whole horizon of dogs  
Is barking far from the river.)

Here is a complete poem, 'Lyric for the Moon': translated for this article by Richard Phibbs.

The moon came to the blacksmith's shop  
bowered in tuberoses.  
The child looks at her, looks at her  
the child stands there looking at her.  
In the frightened air  
the lubricious pure moon

raises her arms and shows  
smooth metal of her breasts.  
Fly, fly away, moon,  
if the gypsies came  
they'd make with your heart  
white rings, white necklaces.  
Child, let me dance,  
When the gypsies come  
they'll find you on the anvil  
your little eyes fast shut.  
Fly, fly away, moon,  
already I can hear their horses.  
Child let me alone;  
Child do not spoil my stark whiteness.

Striking the drum of the plain  
the rider draws nearer.  
Within the blacksmith's shop  
the child's eyes are shut.

Through the olive grove,  
dark sleep, the gypsies came.  
Their eyes half-closed,  
and their heads thrown backward.

How the barn-owl cries,  
ah! how she cries from the branches.  
The moon leads through the sky  
a child by the hand.

The gypsies weep  
and cry within the forge.  
The empty air is watching, watching.  
Only the empty air keeps vigil.

I have chosen a few examples of his powers as a pictorial poet, but such features are worked into an equally strong representation of the life, feeling and tragedies of the peasants of Southern Spain, set in a rather fatalistic and dramatic mood of joys and sorrows that make up an existence of deep and intense emotion. The Andalusia of Lorca is a far cry from the exotic and touristic scene that appealed to the romantics Gautier, Merimée and Bizet, nor is it the Andalusia of the guitar and the bull-fights of more recent writers who seek local colour. It is his own country, which he loved and lived in, and whose people, gypsies

and peasants and bull-fighters, he knew and could only portray as they are and as they feel. This he has done with all the richness and passion of a southern talent and many of the best developments of modern poetic diction and style. This is what makes Lorca the outstanding genius he is; he has given permanent form to a life and experience that he knew and felt as part of him; and he has done it with great creative, intellectual and emotional equipment.\*

In conclusion, it must be insisted that Lorca's greatness is as much Spanish as European. He not only utilised the new poetry or 'pure poetry' and its standards, which were prevalent throughout the whole of Western Europe, but much of his most inspired verse is written in the traditional lyrical forms of the Spain of the past. As a poet of the new Spain, born with the '98 writers, he knew, as few recent Spanish poets did, the many-sided treasures of language and metre that were to be gleaned from the past. Therefore, it should not surprise his reader to find that all his *Romancero gitano* and much of his other lyrical collections are written in the age-old octosyllabic ballad metre of Spain that has served the varying moods of poets, learned and popular alike, since the late Middle Ages to the present day. (Ballads in this old style were produced by Republican soldier-poets during the Civil War.)

Thus Lorca combines the results of the great poets of the Spanish Golden Age with the experience of contemporary verse. Lorca, the intellectual, the member of literary *cenacles*, was at the same time the companion and poet of the peasants and gypsies whose unique yet deeply human life he brilliantly evoked.

(\*I attempt to give in my translations the ideas of the poet. To render the music and word-suggestion would be beyond my powers.)

## *Walter Sickert*

CLIVE BELL

**A**t my preparatory school we learnt by heart a little poem called 'The Chameleon', the moral of which was, as you might guess, 'Remember others see as well as you'. Those who write or talk about Sickert would do well to bear this poem in mind; for those who knew him intimately, or at any rate saw him frequently and talked with him during thirty years or more, could never feel sure that their Sickert was

Sickert's Sickert, or that Sickert's Sickert corresponded with any ultimate reality. Only the pictures were there to prove that a temperament, with an eye and a hand, called Sickert or Walter Sickert or Richard Sickert or Walter Richard Sickert existed and throughout a long development from Whistlerian days to the last could be recognised. If only the excellent Dr. Emmons had understood this, his not very good book *The Life and Opinions of Walter Richard Sickert* might have been better; but I doubt Dr. Emmons is of those who never so much as surmised that chameleons change colour. 'The opinions of Walter Richard Sickert', what were they? They boxed the compass between a first and a third glass of wine. Sickert was a chameleon, and the most I hope to suggest is some plausible explanation of the fact.

Sickert was a *poseur*: he belonged to an age of *poseurs*, the age of Wilde and Husmans and Whistler. If, to be an artist, it was not absolutely necessary to *épater les bourgeois*, it was necessary to do so in order to be reckoned one in the best circles. And it was in the best artistic and intellectual circles that Sickert was admired. In London, at the beginning of the century, his position was remarkable, and, I think, enviable. He was not a popular artist but he was esteemed. English people of intelligence and culture, whose culture was mildly cosmopolitan and more or less up to date, had to have an English painter to admire, and whom could they have but Sickert? That he was their best may have counted for something: more to the purpose was the fact that he was neither Victorian nor precisely Edwardian, neither stodgy nor stupid nor quite respectable. Also, at that time, he was not provincial. He was a good European, a man of the great world, and well enough mannered to have taken a minor part in a novel by Henry James. He was extremely good and interesting looking: he was thoroughly presentable: and he was an actor. Never forget—Sickert never let one forget—that his earliest passion and progression was the stage.

Possibly it is significant that I met Sickert first, not in a studio, but in Bedford Square, lunching with Mrs. Prothero. That must have been about the year 1907; but already I had heard a great deal about him and had seen his pictures, not in London, but in Paris. I met him often during the Fitzroy period, the period of Saturday afternoon tea-parties and discreet advertisements in the *Westminster Gazette*; and got to know him, or so it seemed, at the time of the first Post-Impressionist exhibition (1911–12). His behaviour in that affair was characteristic. Naturally the art of Cézanne, still more the art of Matisse and Picasso, was to him unsympathetic. It was, or seemed at the moment to be, a challenge to his own and to that of his masters; for in 1911, I am ashamed to say, to many of us post-impressionist meant anti-impres-

sionist. Though Sickert never understood Cézanne, he was much too intelligent not to perceive that the Post-Impressionists were far superior to the pets of their enemies. Characteristically, he made the best, or worst, of both worlds. He jeered at Roger Fry (Rouchard recalls having once asked him why he kept a peculiarly idiotic German picture on his mantelpiece and having received for answer 'pour emmerder Fry') and at the same time poked fun at the self-appointed defenders of orthodoxy, for instance, at Mr. Henry Halliday and Sir Philip Burne-Jones. I seem to remember a letter by him in reply to one of the latter's intemperate outbursts beginning—'Let us see if Philip can be a little gentleman'. Sickert was fond of cracking jokes, some of them not bad, at my expense, which did not prevent him, when I published my first book—largely inspired by the exhibition of which he disapproved and to some extent a paean in praise of Cézanne—from publishing a long and flattering account of it in the *New Age*. Needless to say this friendly article by a friend was studded with disobliging quips. That is the sort of thing good Dr. Emmons cannot quite understand; but understood it must be if we are to get a notion of Sickert.

He was a *poseur* by choice; he was naughty by nature and he never ceased to be an actor. In order not to be disconcerted and misled one had to know what part at any given moment he had cast himself for. One day he would be John Bull and the next Voltaire; occasionally he was the Archbishop of Canterbury and quite often the Pope. He was an actor in all companies and sometimes a buffoon. He would dress up as a crook, a raffish dandy, a Seven Dials swell, a bookmaker, a solicitor, or an artist even. And the disguise generally worked—*épaté-d* I mean: only—so the story goes—when he went over to Paris to see the Manet exhibition in the Tuileries dressed up as one of the gentlemen in that master's *Musique aux jardins des Tuileries* did the performance fall flat. That was a Parisian experience to which he never referred. Also he was a rake amongst the scholars and a scholar amongst the rakes, or rather, though a rake he was in so far as a hard-working man who takes his job seriously can be, a man of deep learning in Fitzroy Street and at Cambridge little better than a dunce. Partly, I suppose, through his first wife, née Cobden, he had rubbed shoulders with what are called 'the Intellectuals', and so quick a man had soon picked up from them a smattering of history, politics and science. Unlike most painters he was not wholly unfamiliar with ideas. 'Le peintre', said Degas, 'en général est bête', and he might have added 'ignorant'. Sickert would have been a clever man in any company, clever enough to appear to know a great deal more than he did. He had attended lectures at King's College, and, I believe, passed the London Univer-

sity matriculation examination; so we may credit him with all the erudition these facts imply. But he was not what people in studios and cafés believed him to be: he was not a scholar. He was fond of quoting, and misquoting, Latin tags in and out of season, and was not unwilling that his hearers should conclude that he was in the habit of reading Horace with his feet on the fender. I fancy he had dipped into a good many books in different languages; but it was noticeable that those which lay about in his studios remained where they lay for months and years. French and French slang he knew remarkably well. He could read Goldoni's Venetian plays in the original, but I am not sure that he ever did—all through. I dare say he could speak German before he could read English. Certainly I remember how, one evening during the last war, when he was dining in the Café Royal with Sir Max Beerbohm, Mrs. Hutchisom and me, he burst into such a torrent of German jokes and German songs that Sir Max—at least so it seemed—grew slightly uneasy. It was that evening, after Sir Max had gone home, that he insisted on showing us his 'studios'—‘my drawing studio’, ‘my etching studio’, etc. The operation involved chartering a cab and visiting a series of small rooms in different parts of London. These, as even in those days there was a ‘black-out’ of sorts, had to be visited by match-light—the windows of course being blindless—and by match-light the works of art were inspected. Of one of them, a drawing of a woman with long hair hanging in a plait to the waist, I happened to say that I had known and admired the model, whereupon Sickert insisted on my taking it, as a gift, there and then, observing ‘when a man’s had a lech on a girl he has a right to her picture’. Next day, when we were more ourselves, I persuaded him to accept half the price he would normally have asked, and for five pounds became possessor of a little masterpiece.

Sickert was not a scholar, neither do I think he was a very good writer. Nevertheless, reading Dr. Emmon’s book I discovered that his serious criticism and advice are far more interesting and better expressed than I had supposed. It would be well if these serious pieces could be collected and published in a single volume. But if it is on his letters to the papers that his fame as a writer and a wit is to rest, then it will hardly survive the shock of these letters being re-read. For, to be frank, those famous letters, especially the later ones, while flaunting an air of profundity combined with scintillating snappiness, are as often as not silly, incoherent, beside the point and ungrammatical. Obviously he modelled his controversial style on Whistler’s: a dangerous model, for Whistler was a born and reckless writer. As he grew older his communications to the editor of *The Times* became more incoher-

ent and more frequent and at last suffered the crushing humiliation of being relegated to small print.

In no sense was Sickert a scholar; for, if his acquaintance with books was scrappy, his acquaintance with pictures was not much better. By his own account he used to visit the National Gallery as a boy, and as a young man we must suppose he went sometimes to the Louvre. For my part, I never met him in either; but once I went with him to the National Gallery—for a moment, after lunch—and it was clear he did not know his way about the rooms. Almost always it is instructive to look at the old masters in the company of a good painter. The only picture that seemed to hold Sickert's attention was a Canaletto, and what impressed him was the ingenious way in which the master had managed a transition from the tone of a chimney-pot to that of the circumambient atmosphere. Sickert was the last of the great Impressionists. But even in the Impressionists he took only a limited interest. He took an interest in them in so far as their art unmistakably impinged on his own. Artistically, he belonged to a small clique—a clique determined by topography rather than the bounds of the spirit. Nothing that happened within five hundred yards of Mornington Crescent or Fitzroy Square, as the case might be, was indifferent to him. A rumour that Robinson or Rathbone Place had invented a new method of rendering rime on park palings filled him with excitement not unmingled with dismay. What had been done in Florence in the fifteenth century and what was doing in Paris in the twentieth left him cold, though, in the case of Florence, deferent. He had no standards. He acquired a mass of junk from a little place round the corner and persuaded himself that it consisted mainly of paintings by Tintoretto. 'Whom else can it be by?' he would query with an impressively knowing air. Whom, indeed? always supposing that it was Venetian work of the period. For if it was not by Giorgione or Titian or Veronese only by Tintoretto could it be, since Sickert would hardly have recalled the names of other Venetian painters of the sixteenth century. But 'the work of such imaginative painters as Veronese, or, in our own time and country Leighton, Watts or Poynter . . .' (*The Times*, 3 July, 1913) may suffice to give the measure of his connoisseurship.

My admiration for Sickert's painting is, I hope, fairly well known. I have expressed it in many places at different times; and if Sickert did me the honour of treating me as a friend it was, I surmise, because he was well aware of it. I consider him the greatest British painter since Turner and almost as much above Whistler as below Degas. But I do not think he had genius. He had a great deal of talent, but, unless I mistake, less natural gift than some of his inferiors. What he had

besides talent (some I know hold that his extraordinarily sure sense of tone did amount to genius) was intellect, perseverance and a grand training. For, when all insignificant niceties have been brushed aside, it is clear that Sickert acquired his technique and his discipline in the France of the 'eighties, and to find a time and place in which the art of painting was pursued and studied with at once such ardour, integrity and intelligence we must go back to the Florence of the fifteenth century. He learnt a good deal from Whistler and had the courage to forget the greater part of it; but he never forgot what he learnt from Degas. Foreign blood may have made it easier for him than it appears to be for most British painters to take his art seriously: hereditary also may have been his power of application. It was because he was both intelligent and disciplined that he never attempted to stray beyond his limits: and Sickert was limited. 'One's pictures are like one's toenails,' he once said to me, 'they're one's own whether they're on or off.' I do not find the observation extraordinarily profound: it is characteristic in having a specious air of profundity and memorable as showing that he was at any rate willing to have it believed that to him his pictures were part of himself: also I doubt whether he felt as possessively and affectionately about anything which was not part of himself. His art he took seriously. Not quite seriously towards the end, maybe, when he took to making those comic transcripts of Victorian illustrations. That was Sickert playing the fool. And he played it so heartily and with so good a grace outside his art that one cannot but regret he should ever have played it within. However, these *facetiae* found their billets: they pleased certain ladies of fashion and amateurs who had taken to Sickert late in life; so now they hand in appropriate places, *dulce et decorum est*, as Sickert himself might have put it, *desipere in loco*.

Anyhow, let us agree that Sickert was a great painter and completely sincere. Outside his art he was an actor, a buffoon sometimes, and a delightful companion. His buffoonery, a little trying perhaps in the funny titles he gave his pictures, became in his later public utterances distressing. That famous speech at Sadler's Wells is not a thing of which his more fastidious admirers will wish to be reminded. He liked 'showing off'. About half of what he said and wrote and nothing of what he painted—except some of those 'Echoes'—was meant to startle. His feebler jokes and many of his judgments were to show how unlike he was to other men. For similar reasons he was in the habit of lighting that end of a cheroot which most people put in their mouths. and of shaving or not shaving. His extravagances, his practice of breakfasting at railway stations or of keeping a taxi ticking at one of his front doors the best part of the day, his unpaid tradesmen and overpaid

waiters were all means to the same end. So, to some extent, may have been that trick of sending for a dealer and giving him a corded bale of canvasses for a handful of notes. But I am far from being convinced that Sickert was a bad man of business. Like Mr. Hutton, he believed in low prices and a big turn-over. He would have argued, with elaborate and affected cynicism, that, if an artist had a studio full of pictures, it is better for him to sell fifty a year at twenty pounds apiece than two at two hundred. 'Affected', I say, because I am certain that the deep and unavowed motive was not financial. Sickert sold his pictures cheap, and gave them away too, because he liked to think of Sickerts being looked at by as many people as possible. The more Sickerts in circulation the better, he thought: and so do I.

The biographer who one day will attempt a full-length portrait of Sickert, of Sickert with all his gifts and his absurdities, his contradictions and his charm, will have to realise—I repeat and am sorry to repeat it—that Sickert was a *poseur* besides being a great painter. Also he may discover, perhaps with mild surprise, when he has to explain so many inexplicable sayings and doings and give shape to a mass of refractory data, that at bottom Sickert was a solid, middle-class Englishman. There—he may say—there, but for the grace of God, or the wonders of science, went a Victorian paterfamilias. It is true that Sickert felt most of the respectable feeling though he generally succeeded in hiding them. When he called Albert the good he meant it. He was genuinely shocked when a married picture-dealer of his acquaintance eloped with his secretary, and vexed with me because I was not. 'It isn't done,' he said—I can swear to his very words: but there he was wrong. When some young painters and students, mainly out of a sense of inferiority, I surmise, took to pilfering in Fitzroy and Charlotte Street, he warned the shop-keepers, and warned the young thieves that he would tell the police; for he felt the sacredness of the rights of property instinctively as a citizen should. In fact, he was a sound conservative—or liberal—and would have endorsed most of his eminent ex-father-in-law's opinions had he been familiar with them. One need not take very seriously his pronouncements in favour of the Fascist or Nazi systems; so far as I know he came out with them only when someone was about likely to rise to that bait. But it is on printed record that he felt no pity at all for the blameless Ethiopians and no moral indignation against Mussolini. Sickert frequented men and women of all kinds, not only pimps and prostitutes, fish-wives and scavengers, but the less picturesque classes too—shop-keepers, officers of the merchant marine, solicitors, county-court judges and politicians. He was amused by all sorts and conditions of men and in his way took an interest in

them: but he did not love them. If he was not a Fascist, he, like everyone who has anything to do that requires fine thought, great skill and continuous effort, detested disorder. Yet, being an artist, he was necessarily something of an anarchist and a bit of an aristocrat: at all events, he was an anti-panisocrat, and I think he would have liked the word. Better than most he knew that all men are not equal; and I can imagine few things he would have cared for less than a classless society. Uniformity is not a dish to set before an artist: Sickert loved variety—variety in all things, in men, and women too, clothes, food, manners, ways of life. For that *καλός κἀγαθός* of popular philosophers, the common man, he had no respect whatever, he regarded him as a means and, mocking our Radio Platos, he would, as likely as not, have referred them and their idol to that Authority which recommends us to learn and labour truly to get our own living and to do our duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call us.

## *Leo Tolstoy*

FREDERICK LOHR

There is to-day a revival of interest in Leo Tolstoy. Extracts from his great novel *War and Peace* were broadcast by the B.B.C. in the summer of 1943, and both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* were in the same year presented at London theatres. There is now a growing demand for Tolstoy's works, and though doubtless this will concentrate on his fiction, it is to be hoped that through this will be stimulated an interest in his lesser known but equally important theoretical writings.

For Tolstoy was not only a writer of great novels. He also wrote prolifically on the practical social questions of his day. Indeed, the major part of his life's literary work takes the form of a scathing criticism of nineteenth century civilisation. For over thirty years, to the day he died, he laboured with his pen to expose and correct the evils of modern society.

Leo Tolstoy, seer and prophet! Stern critic of his age, intrepid visionary of the future. It is indeed salutary that this great figure of the last century should be resurrected at this time. For there is much that we can learn from him, much light that he can shed on the causes of the terrible plight in which western civilisation now finds itself.

When well on in middle life and at the height of his fame as a literary

artist, Tolstoy was suddenly struck a blow of moral questioning concerning the life he was leading. Something happened to him that impelled him as a result to renounce the world of wealth and fashion into which, as a Russian aristocrat, he had been born. Inexplicably to his family and friends he began to devote his great talents to subjects in which he had previously shown but pictorial interest. Necessarily as a novelist, he had noted the light and shade of life, the co-existence of luxury and destitution, of idleness and toil, of freedom and slavery. But now these social contrasts disturbed him in a way they had never done before. Now he felt impelled to ask why these things should be. Henceforward he spared no effort to discover an answer to this question, this question which we all come to know as the *social question*.

As always happens to men of deep feeling, the once posited social question precludes a return to previous indifference of it. So it was with Leo Tolstoy. The awakening of his conscience to the intolerable injustice of the division of society into Rich and Poor, made impossible for him a return to the literary expression of his past.

He now applied himself, with the singlemindedness of the seeker after Truth, to the investigation of the structure of the civilisation in which he lived. Searching for a justification of social contradictions he could no longer conscientiously ignore, he turned first to analyse the traditional institutions which, in every civilised country, legitimise the modes of thought which sustain these anomalies. He examined critically the moral foundations of Church and State.

Real heroism now issued from the man. Laboriously and in considerable spiritual pain, for he had no natural aptitude or inclination for abstract thought, he bored his way through the labyrinths of theology and jurisprudence. His most intimate friends, thinking he was in danger of succumbing to religious mania, implored him to abandon this quest into metaphysics and to return to literature. From a sick bed his friend Turgenev writes to him 'Turn back to literature. That is your real gift. Great Poet of our Russian land, hear my plea'.

But the barb of conscience had penetrated deep. Tolstoy held to his way, a way that was ultimately to transform the great literary artist into a crusading pamphleteer, a zealot of moral reform. It has been said that Tolstoy's subsequent work suffers considerably from his changed outlook. Decidedly it falls far short of the genius of *War and Peace*. But Tolstoy was not now seeking to display art, nor to develop subtlety of style. Ruthlessly he disciplined his expression in the interests of forceful language. He was no longer primarily a writer seeking to portray life; now he was a propagandist striving to convert his fellows. His work took on an inconsistency that bordered upon dogmatism. He tried to

convince by the strength of his own convictions. His arguments are hammer blows of logic. The proselyte pamphleteer writes his tracts in terrible earnestness, as though he sees the task he has set himself as the performance of a solemn duty.

Ten years spent in searching religion, philosophy and political science, seeking always a justification and explanation for social inequality, convinced Tolstoy that the ecclesiastical hierarchy is a sham, a pillar supporting injustice. He was persuaded that the State is nothing but the machinery of property protection, and the Law—a justification for the legalisation of violence. He now emerged as an outright social revolutionary preaching anew, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

Most of the revolutionary ideology of the past two centuries has its fountain spring in the tenets of primitive Christianity. But most of the bearers of this revelation are unconscious of this psychological fact. Modern science and research have provided new trappings for old dreams and aspirations. But with Tolstoy the position was otherwise. He preached simply the Gospel of Brotherhood of Man in the Fatherhood of God, The Kingdom of God on earth. Seeing in Love, and in Love alone, the way of brotherhood, he took as his starting point the renunciation of violence, the ethic of non-resistance to evil. In so doing his teaching is driven logically into involvements and implications that go further and deeper than the propaganda of any of the reformers and revolutionists that the turbulent Russia of his time produced.

Tolstoy never styled himself by any political label. He never claimed for himself more than the endeavour to be a Christian. But through his bitter and unrelenting criticism of private property and aristocratic privilege; his open and courageous antagonism towards Church and State, he became known to his own and to later generations as an anarchist whose hatred of governmental Power and ecclesiastical authority was theoretically more intolerant and practically more uncompromising than any of the theorists and activists of political anarchism.

Tolstoy stood alone, as still to-day he stands alone. He received support from neither the socialist reformers nor the anarchist revolutionists. By his insistence that government was the root of social evil he antagonised the socialists who were struggling to gain possession of State Power. By his repudiation of violence as a means to securing justice and equality for the oppressed masses, he took from the anarchist revolutionists the only weapon they saw possible for the liberation of working people from economic slavery and political despotism. Pupils as they were of eighteenth century rationalism and nineteenth century materialism, Tolstoy's primitive Christian moralism was in-

comprehensible to the political progressives of his age, just as it was anathema to the ecclesiastics of the Orthodox Church who felt compelled to excommunicate him. And, in truth, for the modern revolutionary, faced with the grim realities of militarism and class-struggle, Tolstoy's Christian ethics and his exhortations to practical anarchistic behaviour are not easy to reconcile. Nor is it any the less difficult for Christian people of our day to accept Tolstoy's interpretation of Christ's teaching, and at the same time to remain within the fold of the institutional Church. Such apparent contradictions are resolved only by constantly remembering, so far as Tolstoy is concerned, the theistic nature of his moral starting point. For those of us who with Tolstoy believe in the existence of God and the realm of spiritual realities, it is necessary always in the face of conflicting temporal contingencies, to affirm sincerely and without compromise that man's actions are to be judged not by relative standards of expediency, but by transcendental values. For those who are indifferent or antagonistic to Tolstoy's theism, such forethought is an unnecessary hindrance to action. To such Tolstoy will ever remain incomprehensible and his teaching inconsistent.

Tolstoy's teaching is hard. It strikes no less keenly against national and class prejudices than against cultural and personal pretensions. It is no escape from his relentless logic to dismiss him as merely a moralist. Tolstoy *was* a moralist, and it is true that much of his later writing appears to be disfigured by an over-rationalistic moralism. But we cannot disregard him because of that. His teaching on social problems, if unwelcome, must be combated on the ground he fights—that of reasoning from moral premises. And after all, every criticism of our social order, no matter from what political direction it comes, must proceed from moral criteria. Every desire to change the structure, or to transform the basis of society, springs from the manifest incompatibility of social fact with moral consciousness. The historical claims to political liberty and economic equality, to freedom of speech, thought and religious worship, are one and all claims to justice. None of these claims would in fact have any validity at all, were not justice itself an accepted moral norm. We are accustomed to measure the degree to which moral consciousness has advanced in society by the amount of pressure which these claims to justice exert upon traditional privilege and inequalities. We mark the stages reached in human progress by the advances made in morality. For the progress of humanity is to be conceived *only in terms of humanity*, and not in terms of mechanical achievement. And humanity, as the criterion of progress, surely means that human behaviour and social relationships shall be increasingly

motivated and sustained by reason, sympathy and justice, and ever less by passion and brute force.

The entire structure of Tolstoy's thought on the ethical, economic and political relationships within society is built upon the principle of non-violence (non-resistance by violence to evil). To Tolstoy, violence done by man to man is wrong. It is never justifiable as a means to social welfare. Indeed he constantly reiterates that the only method of advance to human betterment is by way of 'non-resistance to evil'.

Now whilst most people would agree with the principle of non-violence as being a desirable ethic, as a lofty and worthy ideal, few there are even to-day (perhaps because of to-day), who would maintain its relevancy to practical politics. For most of us this call to non-violent behaviour involves a division of consciousness. We find it not impossible to be ethically non-violent in contemplation, in the mind —ideally. But in action, in our practical politics, we are alas, compelled to behave very differently. Real life, we find, is not amenable to such utopian intention. Non-violence is a wonderful ideal we think, but the facts of history and of life are against idealistic politics.

But this attitude only reveals our non-understanding of Tolstoy's position. We can accuse him of rationalism, but not of idealism. To him idea and action are identical. He intends us to see non-violence not as an ideal towards which we work and by which we ultimately judge our conduct, but to make non-violence our normal practice, our every day attitude towards life. Tolstoy is not an advocate of the *abolition* of violence as a political programme. He envisages no party or sect which will arise to compel people to cease from violence. This is a socialistic intention—to abolish violence. But Tolstoy stresses the necessity to *renounce* which is quite different from to *abolish*. To abolish violence one must fight against it. To renounce violence, one ceases to fight violence, one ceases even to *think* it. Tolstoy would seek so to transform our values as to make violence abhorrent to us. So abhorrent, so contrary to our habits of life, that we shall as it were, become *physically incapable* of enmity and bloodshedding. One has only to follow Tolstoy's arguments to realise what a revolutionary change of society follows from the repudiation of violence as a means to the attainment of human ends. Much of our esteemed material progress would necessarily be subordinated to what he calls 'human values'. To the man who rejects the principle of violence, and who is unable to support and sanction human warfare, there follows a repudiation of the fruits of violence, such as the exploitation of men and animals.

Now Tolstoy is often reproached as a reactionary and a mediaevalist because he calls upon us to renounce the products of modern industrial-

ism which make life so pleasant for many of us. But this accusation completely misconstrues Tolstoy's meaning. He does not ask us to abandon the achievements of science and industry, but points out that where such achievements are accomplished at the expense of human exploitation and degradation, it is immoral of us to continue to employ them in *this form*. True, the implication is that if such things are unobtainable except by such means, then we *should* forgo them in the interests of human fellowship and justice. It is said that one half of society does not know how the other half lives. If we only knew the cost in human misery of many of the things which we use and consume so lightheartedly, our moral conscience would be so disturbed that the savour of those things would disappear. To point out this truth is the intention of one of Tolstoy's tracts called 'The Slavery of Our Times'. In it Tolstoy develops the argument that all social evils spring from the sanctioning of violence in social affairs. His analysis carries him into a condemnation of generally honoured and long-established institutions such as State and Church. He traces the origin of class-divided society, and its consequent exploitation of the many by the few, to the acquiescence in, and later sanctification of, the systematic use of organised violence. 'Laws', he says, 'are rules made by people who govern by means of organised violence.'

Now there is great confusion of mind to-day regarding the function of government. Many people incline to believe that government is functional machinery for the satisfaction of society's needs. Tolstoy makes clear that it is not the function of government to organise any *social* requirement, but solely to control and direct the use of force. No one can deny that Governments do, and can, only exist by possessing force, whereas many organisations perform social functions without reliance upon coercion. Indeed, one might say that the use of coercion by any organised body is evidence of its anti-social nature and purpose. For instance, it would be difficult to see how riches and poverty could exist side by side in any society whose government was not prepared to use force to maintain the unequal division of socially-produced wealth.

It is just this wholesale condemnation of violence that creates such a dilemma for many sincere reformists and revolutionaries to-day. For if violence is not to be used to abolish violence, how then is society ever to transcend its present manifest unjust conditions? Tolstoy maintains firmly and unequivocably that we cannot cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub. We are not to use violence to overthrow violence. Rightly or wrongly, Tolstoy pins his faith to the appeal to moral consciousness. First, he says, we are to observe that organised violence, for one cause or another, rests upon *approval*. The *disapproval* of violence is the first

step towards its elimination. Proceeding from this is the struggle to unite morality to practice, to overcome the inherent dualism of our mode of living, even to the extent of sacrificing material progress to the ends of human justice and equality. Moral satisfactions, he insists, must take primacy over material desires.

This appeal to the moral consciousness must necessarily be an appeal to *individuals*, and many opponents of Tolstoy will lose no time in pointing out that individual action is useless and inadequate in a world in which society's form is determined by *social* forces and *class*-interests. Tolstoy does not disregard this point of view, but replies to it, by affirming quite rightly, that ultimately society is a consequence of human *conduct*, and therefore in the last analysis, the behaviour of men in society is determined by *will*.

It is to bring this will in harmony with reason and moral consciousness that is the purpose of Tolstoy's literary endeavours. Whether we agree wholeheartedly with his analysis or not, whether we accept his moral norms (taken as they are from his acceptance and interpretation of the Christian gospel) or not, are not matters of prime importance. What, however, is of the first importance, is that when considering Tolstoy, when assessing his contribution to contemporary problems, we constantly bear in mind that his teaching is a call to humanity—to us all—not to contemplation, but to action. Tolstoy is not to be understood by those who conceive of action towards social justice in terms of mass-risings and civil wars, but by those whose understanding reveals that social change takes place first in the heart of the individual—that there commences the civil war which eventually will transform and transfigure this sinful world of ours into the Kingdom of Heaven.

## *James Joyce*

J. F. HENDRY

James Joyce's technique requires at least three critical methods to be applied to it before any adequate survey can be made. These are: (i) the musical, i.e. sound, shape and rhythm of words and sentences; (ii) the philological, i.e. composition of new words, use of old words in contexts suggesting their origin, use of foreign words, and scientific construction of primitive sounds; (iii) the mythical, or philosophical. This last is of underlying significance, and emerges from a study of the

other two, revealing the full extent of Joyce's genius as an exponent of the social psyche.

These methods can be applied throughout, from the first *Pomes Penyeach* up to *Finnegan's Wake*. There is, for example, in *Pomes Penyeach*, the affective music of:

‘A senile sea numbers each single  
Slimesilvered stone.’  
(“On the Beach at Fontana”)

where alliteration, portmanteau-word and images combine to impress upon the reader the sense of being in actual physical touch with reality. This is the earliest form of the Joycean experiment with language. It is almost purely biological, like his delight in the word ‘Leib’, for its rounded completeness.

Other examples, from the same volume, occur in:

‘The shorelamps in the sleeping lake  
Laburnum tendrils trail . . .’  
(‘Alone’)

or in the phrase from ‘Nightpiece’, ‘night's sindark nave’.

It is important also to remember the background to these poems. They were written in Trieste, or in Zürich, from 1912 until 1918. Then, as now, youth faced a world war, and societies virulent with the nationalism which in its worst form is blood-prejudice. The full horror of mass-violence had dawned on none. Joyce, the cosmopolitan, as opposed to the mere megalopolitan, was uneasy. Note his choice of residence, Trieste, Triest, Trst, the town of three peoples, Austrian, Slav and Italian, and one of the few places deserving the status of a free city. As a cosmopolitan he felt he had no share in the European massacre, or in any purely exclusive movement, whether young Ireland or the Church. ‘Snares’ he calls them in the *Portrait*, which must be avoided if he is to find himself.

This is the only myth which emerges from the early work, the figure of a romantic young man in exile, who ‘travels after a winter sun’, but who is true at least to his own spirit.

‘The voice tells them home is warm.  
They moo and make brute music with their hoofs.  
He drives them with a flowering branch before him,  
Smoke pluming their foreheads.’

The technical effect of such inner concentration is not only that it makes the words more organic, the images more tangible and the feel-

ings more eloquent, but also that the vision becomes itself sharper and more penetrating, as in that masterpiece in the volume *Dubliners*, called *The Dead*.

The autobiography, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* represents a great advance in the same organic style, in which word and rhythm, sentence and structure, are wedded to the actual experience being communicated.

'There was once a moo-cow coming down along the road, and this moo-cow . . .' provides the opening for one of the finest books of the twentieth century, in style and content and sincerity. The observant, critical, Jesuitical Joyce of *Dubliners* reaches in it maturity.

In a recent broadcast Mr. T. S. Eliot pointed out the importance of reading Joyce's books in gradation and order of difficulty, since each in a sense is a clue to the next. He also insisted, and rightly so, that Joyce's Jesuit education abroad combined with his Celtic ancestry and considerable abilities as a linguist, to equip him well for his task of handling dispassionately and in a new way the language of the English, so as to reveal something of the European consciousness.

The *Portrait*, in other words, reveals Joyce as a European, not an American, like certain pseudo-tough writers of an age whose doubtful glory is violence. He does *not* do violence to English. The word-coining and changing is always a careful exploration of the linking of sound and sense. There is the story of Joyce in his Swiss café, searching, not for the right word, that he has found already, but for the right place to put it.

This is a search for articulation in its fullest sense; articulation of the mind, articulation of the body in correct gesture and right action, in one word, growth.

Not until *Ulysses*, however, does Joyce rise to full consciousness of his task as one of shortening (almost of circumventing) and condensing experience. There are two main characters in the book, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, woven into a strange drama of a young man's thoughts and adventures within twenty-four hours in Dublin. Both of these have been claimed to be Joyce himself, and Mr. Eliot has gone so far as to assert that Joyce succeeded in creating only one character, and that by the delineation of his own opposite, in Bloom.

There is more to it than that. In the future, perhaps, these two great books will become like the Bible a meeting-ground where every shade of opinion will discover evidence to support its claims. Yet it may be said now with some truth that, socially, Stephen is the protagonist of young Ireland, and Leopold Bloom the prototype of chaotic megalopolitan wanderer evolved by Hitler out of Jewish capitalism, and by

Marx out of the power-crazed bourgeoisie. Both are valid as myths, as they are valid as personalities. Are they real in any final sense? Hardly. They are myths of our time. They do not really think in terms of the world.

Nevertheless doctrinaire criticism that Joyce ignored the problems of his era is short-sighted and unjust. Time has shown that he included more in his vision of reality than the English left-wing snapshots of the thirties.

Again, some of the most beautiful writing in *Ulysses* and in all the English language, occurs in the inconsequential passages, such as the well-known description of the dog on the seashore: 'He ambled about a bank of dwindling sand.' Prose such as this, with its pure vision and pictorial power make one regret the vanished stylist Joyce might have been in the absence of the social prejudice which forced him into myth and Rabelaisian philology. This is the pure organic flow of natural forms from which his other styles are ultimately only aberrations, and to which he constantly seeks to return.

For there are as many styles to this man as there are aspects of reality. The nightmare scene in *Ulysses*—a kind of 'Last Judgment'—already contains the seed of the vaster *Finnegan's Wake*: while the 'monologue' of the woman, at the end of *Ulysses*, besides being a phantasmagoria of passion, dissolution and female death reminiscent of Picasso, is also a preparation for its final statement in 'Anna Livia Plurabelle'.

Little so far has been written on this tangle of subconscious satire and lyrical delight. Using the critical keys mentioned above, however, it will be found that the books divide easily into separate passages suitable for study and appreciation.

Thus there is the well-known section 'Anna Livia Plurabelle', which is much more beautiful and comprehensible now against the background of the book than when Faber first issued it in their Miscellany Series. In the night of human life it assumes peculiar anthropomorphic significance.

Here he is said to mention by name no less than sixty rivers. That they are by no means noticeable is a tribute to the sheer music of the writing. To name them all is pointless, but among them are the Dneiper (now abused by the B.B.C. as Dneeper instead of Dnyeper), Ganges, Ebro, Vistula, Clyde, Nieman, Neva, Amstel, Garonne, Wupper and the Dniester, all lovely names with which masculine war has made us more familiar. Joyce has built them into a geography of love and beauty. Anna Livia Plurabelle is the myth of a maiden's affairs, of a maiden who represents also the female principle of generation in nature. It is a monologue of romantic love in the undisciplined subconscious,

the story of 'old amnisty ann' to whom all things are ultimately forgiven; of 'old Moppa Necessity', mother of sorrow and tribulation as well as sweet delight. She incorporates all the elements of the ancient Furies and Harpies, in addition to the isolated loveliness of Iseult. The 'shy young thing', who is a tenuous first source, 'makes herself tidal to join in the mascarete'.

The effortless lyricism of the prose in the beginning has all the inevitable grace of natural thing when unconfined:

'O  
Tell me all about  
Anna Livia! I want to hear all

about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course, we all know Anna Livia. Tell me all. Tell me now. You'll die when you hear. Well, you know when the old chebb went phutt and did what you know. Yes I know. Go on. Wash quit and don't be dabbling. Tuck up your sleeves and loosen your talk-tapes.'

Hints, love-signs, flirtations, impatience, provocation, are all here. This confluence of rivers is the meeting-place of sex, the vital fluid and the concurrence of the essential streams of living we might call the soul or spirit.

This is the half-told tale of Anna Livia and H. C. E., known as Here Comes Everybody. 'Where was he born and where was he found?': 'Linking the one and knocking the other'.

The curious rudimentary philosophy underlying annihilation of identity in the beginning is the philosophy of Nihilism. It reveals reaction as the psychology of regression. 'Nieman from nirgends found the nihil.' Nobody from nowhere found the nothing. Perhaps he was a Norman? Upon the apparent promiscuity of nature depends the Nihilist's philosophy of struggle, says Joyce, in fewer words.

Within this chaos man is form and discipline and selection: see the source and growth of Anna:

'First of all worst of all, the wiggly livvly, she sideslipped out by a gap in the Devil's glen while Sally her nurse was sound asleep in a sloot, and feefee, fiefie, fell over a spillway before she found her stride and lay and wiggled in all the stagnant black pools of rainy water under a fallow coo and she laughed innocefree with her limbs aloft and a whole drove of maiden hawthorns blushing and looking askance upon her.'

There is the lovely lyrical ending:

'Can't hear with the waters of. The chittering waters of. Flittering bats, fieldmice, bawk talk. Ho! Are you not gone ahome? What Thom

Malone? Can't hear with bawk of bats, all them liffeying waters of. Ho, talk save us! My foos won't moos. I feel as old as younder elm. A tale told of Shaun and Shem? All Livia's daughters. Dark hawks hear us. Night! Night! My ho head halls. I feel as heavy as yonder stone. Tell me of John or Shaun? Who were Shem and Shaun the living sons or daughters of. Night now! Tell me, tell me, tell me, elm! Night night! Telmetale of stem or stone. Beside the rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of, Night!

These two passages are pure music, incantations full of wizardry and melody. There is little to be said about them, except that they are written in separate scales, one major, the other minor, and that the mystical unity of life and consciousness is brought out in each. The dominant symbol is water, source of life, and symbol of fertility. The story of Anna Livia Plurabelle is a tale of the fertility rite, yet always its own justification, like all melody and rhythm.

To this feminine myth corresponds the Celtic myth after which the book is named: the myth of Finn, the Scottish Fingal, and type of the Celtic warrior. Here is a passage suitable to the three kinds of analysis we have outlined:

'Bygmester Finnegan, of the stuttering Hand, freemen's mauerer, lived in the broadest way immarginable in his rushlit toofarback for messuages before joshuan judges had given us numbers or Helveticus committed deuteronomy....'

The allusions here are tightly packed and worth disentangling for the light they throw on one of the ancestors of H. C. Earwicker, also known in his evolutionary growth as *Here Comes Everybody*.

'Bygmester' is an approximation to the Irish pronunciation of 'big Mr. Finnegan', but it is also a pun on 'burgomaster' and 'Bürgermeister', German for Mayor. The 'stuttering hand' may be an allusion to the famous 'Red Hand' of Connaught. 'Freeman's mauerer' is more subtle. 'Mauerer' is German for 'mason'; but as 'mauer' is 'wall', it is also wall-builder; so the builder of freedom becomes the builder of walls against freedom. There is also the pun on 'freemasonry', to which these strictures, in view of Joyce's Jesuit upbringing, probably also apply.

'The broadest way immarginable' is the beginning of satire of liberal democracy as expressed on 'Broadway'.

'In his rushlit toofarback', 'rushlit' presumably meaning lit by torches; and 'toofarback' being a reference to the Celtic 'fringe' and the Australian 'outback'.

'Helveticus' is obviously Leviticus, plus Helvetius, or Switzerland. Celtic civilisation existed before Christianity which is the basis of

Europe's society, and before the first expression of man's freedom in the Swiss Confederation.

This is a transcript of Irish folk-consciousness, and through it of human, pagan consciousness, so that it is difficult to know if Finnegan is assisting at the wake of his friend H. C. Earwicker (or should it be Europe?) so that all this flood of rich prose becomes his semi-conscious ruminations in whisky: ('Hootch is for husbandman handling his hoe':) or whether Finn is the subject of the vigil, around whose corpse crowd Anna and H. C. E. and a host of the friends of experience, drinking and singing:

'In the name of Annah the Allmaziful, the Everliving, the Bringer of Plurabilities, haloed be her eve, her singtime sung, her till be run, unhemmed as it is uneven'; or even whether it is not all wicked satire upon the world's mumbo-jumbo, a tale of sound and fury signifying nothing.

In any case Finn merges into H. C. E. and satire of Anglo-Saxon democracy begins, which is the logical successor to the satire, in *Ulysses*, on British Imperialism.

'An imposing everybody he always indeed looked, constantly the same as and equal to himself and magnificently well worthy of any and all such universalisation.'

This is the biography to end biographies, the debunking of greatness by blood or social necessity. It is almost the debunking of the entire social fabric, conventions, inhibitions, and perfunctory ideals: not quite: only the bourgeois, is satirised, the amorphous Anglo-American peddler of pills and capital.

See the ballad of Persse O'Reilly:

'He was fafafather of all schemes for to bother us  
 Slow coaches and immaculate contraceptives for the populace,  
 Mare's milk for the sick; seven dry Sundays a week,  
 Openair love and religious reform....'

or

'We had chaw chaw chops, chairs, chewing gum, the chicken pox and  
 china chambers  
 Universally provided by this soffsoaping salesman  
 Small wonder He'll cheat E'erawan our local lads nicknamed him....'

Some of the satire, as in the section on Shem (once 'Two Tales of Shem and Shaun') is almost Swiftian in its penetrating savagery: 'Sniffer of carrion, premature grave-digger, seeker of the nest of evil in the bosom of a good word, you who sleep at our vigil and fast for

our feast, you with your dislocated reason, have cutely foretold, a jophet in your own absence, by blind poring upon your many scalds and burns and blisters, impetiginous sore and pustules, by the auspices of that raven cloud, your shade, and by the auguries of rooks in parliament, death with every disaster, the dynamitisation of colleagues, the reducing of records to ashes, the levelling of all customs by blazes, the return of a lot of sweet-tempered gunpowdered didst unto dudst....'

In passages like these Joyce's knockabout satire and tumbling fun seem suddenly stilled, and he sneaks with a clarity striking sure at the heart of things.

The choicest satire, however, is probably in the surrealist nightmare of *Unde Et Ubi* in which the annotations, interpolations and paragraph headings provide scathing rebukes of the jargon of much modern logical-positivist philosophy, legal hair-splitting, and bureaucratic bumbledon.

We have: 'Imaginery Itinerary Through the Particular Universal: Probapossible Prologomena to Ideareal History': and the lovely 'Gnosis of Precreate Determination. Agnosis of Postcreate Determinism.'

We have 'The Localisation of Legend Leading to the Legislation of Latifundism': and 'From Cenogenetic Dichotomy through Diagonistic Conciliation to Dynastic Continuity.'

This is the language of excessive specialisation, approaching madness. It is neither a dream nor a joke in fact, but an accurate picture of the dissolution of human reason, through excessive centripetal force. To Joyce it is 'pure ching chong idiotism, with any way words all in one soluble. Gee each owe tea eye smells fish. That's U.'

Even a Joycean definition is necessary.

There are passages where the rhythm and the music form a bright atmosphere of magic, yet which cannot be judged solely as music:

'Hark!

Tolv two elf kater ten (it can't be) sax.

Hark!

Pedwar pemp foify tray (it must be) twelve.

And low stole o'er the stillness the heartbeats of sleep.

White fogbow spans. The arch embattled.'

The literary allusions in Joyce are frequently Elizabethan. This section, in music at least, breathes the mystery of the Ghost Scene in *Hamlet*, a tower, night, footsteps, echoing the prelude to dreams in a mixture of English, Welsh, Italian, German and French. More than once there is too, in Joyce, a hint of Hart Crane's dangerous, mad

borderland of *Brooklyn Bridge*, but it is swamped in the general Shakespearean energy and Lewis Carrollish life-talk.

Those familiar with the choicer examples of modern philosophy and the pseudo-authoritarian jargon of the civil service, may when reading the above remember parallel examples of meaningless noise in the most impressive surroundings; the illiteracy of judges, the pidgin English stutter of the brains trust, the sag and crack of the ill-built buttresses of pomp.

Says Wittgenstein, 'Die Welt ist alles was der Fall ist'. Says the English translator, 'The world is everything that is the case'.

In Heaven's name, says Joyce, what has that to do with it? *The World is All That Is The Fall*.

What do we mean by *case*? Is the world, to the frozen English genius, on trial for its life?

And what is the *Fall*? To Joyce, a waterfall; Newton's Apple; the first stumble of a child; the original error that sets the foot aright; tumbles in a hayrick....

The ridiculous guilt of legality implicit even in the statute-book is all that word 'case'. Joyce denies the world is any case. His case, latifundism and dynastic continuity, had their origin in the localisation of legend and cenogenetic dichotomy. He opposes the dichotomy of philosophy, and every attempt to suppress man's sense of unity with his world. His philosophy is organic, and much closer to Wittgenstein's than mere transliteration reveals. His thought is of the best of his time, and not simply Celtic sentiment.

It is of course obvious that much of the jargon above is reaction to the academic Jesuit schooling: but it does at times make sense. He did learn to think.

How are we to disentangle the elements of myth so as to make them yield something of which the future may be shaped? No work of art is pure chaos: and it is impossible, said Freud, to talk nonsense. To much of Joyce the word 'Minatorium' applies. In toto, it is a bringing together of all myths and allusions: an attempt to describe past, present and future as it lies co-terminous in the human subconscious: not yet as it lies also, spread out in fields of light in the endless vision of Blake. For Joyce, much of it remains as yet too terrible for enunciation. This is presumably what Stephen Spender meant when he confessed that to him *Finnegan's Wake* was a vast sketch for some future masterpiece.

D. H. Lawrence of course considered it obscenity of the kind attacked in his pamphlet on Pornography. Soldiers might call it 'swill', or even 'bullshit'. I should call it in Joyce's own language, not the 'kaotification of cosmology', but the 'cosmystification of chaos'.

When, four years ago, I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Frank Budgen read extracts from both *Finnegan's Wake* and *Ulysses*, as he had heard Joyce read them in Paris, I was impressed by the remarkably even tone, the absence of particular stress, and the stream of apparent insouciance and inconsequence, of the lilting music. Again there is more to it than that. A stream has a bed, sometimes silted, or rich in alluvial deposit. There may be only mud in it; or minerals; or even gold, to be washed out. *Finnegan's Wake* is like that.

Joyce is something of a gold-prospector, or an alchemist. What final figure, if any, emerges from a consideration of his work as a whole? The impression of an independent mind involved in the struggle against chaos. Remember the passage in *Ulysses* discussing the 'ineluctable modality of the visible', when Stephen complete with symbolic ashplant walks the empty seashore ruminating on the meaning of existence. There is a fine mind at work there, which finally settles in acceptance of the Bergsonian philosophy of flux. As a corrective, one should read Wyndham Lewis' *Time and Western Man*.

Joyce was terribly involved in the struggle against chaos, personally involved. He rejected so many ready-made solutions because they were ready-made. He preferred to live out and think or feel out his own solution, and there is plenty of evidence that his acceptance of Bergson was vital for him, and did him a considerable amount of good. *He* was in a state of flux. His inner modality, to him, was the right to live and to change as he felt he must; and it was also the dissolution in him of every influence that was alien and inhibiting and inorganic. It was his powerful dissolvent. When applied to the world, however, it was not quite such a powerful dissolvent, because in the night of existence no compelling force emerges to stem the disaster of complete non-entity. Yet day follows night as surely as night follows day. Perhaps in a later book he would have merged the two in one: and Stephen Daedalus would have outgrown the gigantic nightmare figure of Bloom.

To me, Bloom is resuscitated in *Finnegan's Wake*, in the nebulous person of H. C. Everybody, whereas Stephen merges with Finnegan. It is not possible at this stage to say that Finnegan and H. C. E. are in conflict, or even that they are opposites. However, the wake is undoubtedly Finnegan's, and if it is possible for Finnegan at his own wake, whether it is merely a dream or not, to sense the presence of H. C. E. then H. C. E. is just as likely to be a dream of Finnegan's, as his descendant. In other words, *E Pluribus Unum* is likely to be reversed. Whilst Joyce believes in the unity of man in society he cannot accept the spurious and artificial figure advanced by the mass civilisation of to-day. That is the figure which is dead. Perhaps it was never

alive, for all Finnegan knows. Certainly he was never as alive as Anna Livia, or all the lovely women who spent their time looking for him since women are social creatures and like a society in which everybody is friendly and not so very different from the neighbours.

Anyway, even if H. C. E. is dead, and a whole era and a whole myth is dead, in which democratic man breathed and had his being only through the draughts in a leaky parliament, there is still Finnegan and his like in every country, not very sure of his subdivisions perhaps, rather nationalist perhaps, rather anarchist perhaps, certainly left perhaps, most certainly solid and hungry for sure, quite as indefinitely stupid and argumentative, but thank God oppressively there unlike the pretentious Nobody we were all chasing, and—how like an Irishman! Sh!—smelling and drunk at the WAKE.

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## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

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The following brief details about contemporary British and Irish little reviews are printed in order to give some background knowledge of this interesting, though somewhat scattered, field of publications. Name of editor, address and price of publication are given at the end of each summary, and any reader seeking further information can best obtain it by sending for a copy of the current issue of the publication or publications in which he is interested. It should be emphasised that this list, though fairly comprehensive, is by no means complete, and the editor would be very glad to hear from editors of any little reviews not at present included.

*Adelphi*. One of the oldest of present-day little reviews, the *Adelphi* applies a pacifist and humanitarian attitude to literature and allied arts, and is published from a large pacifist farming community centre of the same name. A large amount of space is given to book reviews—mostly of books about philosophy, religion, politics and literature—and many of the general articles are written with reference to some important new book. Stories, sketches and poems are also published, as well as critical studies of writers and philosophers. Contributors include Henry Williamson, Ethel Mannin, J. Hampden Jackson, Frank Lea, Earl of Portsmouth, Richard Ward, James Kirkup, Bill Grindlay and J. P. Hogan. *Adelphi* is edited by John Middleton Murry and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from Lodge Farm, Thelnetham, Via Diss, Norfolk.

*Bell*. The aim of this review is 'to let Irish life speak for itself', and since its inception soon after the outbreak of the war it has provided a much needed outlet in a country where an extraordinarily severe censorship seems to be applied as much to literature and art as to politics. While favouring what it terms 'realistic nationalism', the review opposes the romantic type of nationalism preached by the Gaelic League. In addition to some excellent short stories about Irish life and characters, *Bell* prints regular articles and criticism on Irish drama, education, music, poetry, village crafts, together with book reviews and poetry. Studies of literature and life in other countries are often included. Contributors include Frank O'Connor, Geoffrey Taylor, John Hewitt, Sean Jennett, Roy McFadden, W. R. Rodgers, Bryan MacMahon, Valentin Iremonger and Peadar O'Donnell. *Bell* is edited by Sean O'Faolain, and published monthly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 43 Parkgate Street, Dublin, Eire.

*Convoy*. This is a new publication which aims, as its title indicates, to join together the writings and ideas of different outlooks, and in particular 'to try to bring about a better understanding between new and

young people of all nations'. Preference is given to the work of new and younger writers, both civilian and in the Services. As part of a policy of insisting that the responsibility of citizenship can only come from a study of present institutions, etc., *Convoy* gives a large amount of space to reportage and sketches about life in various spheres—i.e. coal-mining, medical work, planning, demobilisation, the place of women, naval life, etc. Many short stories and a few poems are also printed. Contributors to the first issue included Peter Scott, Pamela Frankau, John Jarmain, Elizabeth Myers, Roy Fuller, Alun Lewis, Nick Malleson, Anthony Naumann, David Langdon and A. G. Morris. *Convoy* is edited by Robin Maughan, and published occasionally, price 1s. per copy, from 48 Pall Mall, London. (William Collins.)

*Cornhill*. Since it was launched under the editorship of Thackeray, in January, 1860, this review has published most of the great writers of the time. Although it had to cease publication in 1939, it was revived towards the end of 1943 and the first issue in a new format appeared in January, 1944. The policy is to try and provide a platform for full-length essays and extensive critical and biographical studies which do not usually find space in magazines. At the same time each issue usually contains at least one first-class short story and some poetry. Contributors include John Betjeman, Elizabeth Bowen, Raymond Mortimer, John Piper, Maurice Bowra, Clive Bell, Tom Harrison, Osbert Lancaster, Philip Toynbee, William Sansom and Robin Ironside. *Cornhill* is edited by Peter Quennell, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 50 Albemarle Street, London, W. 1. (John Murray's.)

*Dublin Magazine*. Founded in the summer of 1923, this review is one of the most influential of Irish literary publications and has published almost every Irish writer of note during the past twenty-two years. Apart from book and play reviews, art criticism and Irish folk-lore studies, a good deal of space is given to creative writing in the form not only of short stories and poetry, but also of short plays—a feature not often found in reviews. In a reference to *Dublin Magazine*'s coming-of-age the editor mentioned that it is read not only in European countries, but also in U.S.A., South Africa, Australia, India, China, Japan, East and West Africa. Contributors include Mary Lavin, J. Lyle Donaghy, J. Redwood Anderson, Donagh MacDonagh, Maurice James Craig, Padraig Fallon, Austin Clarke, Edward Sheehy, Paul Vincent Carroll and L. A. G. Strong. *Dublin Magazine* is edited by Seumas O'Sullivan, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d., from 2 Crow Street, Dublin, Eire.

*English*. This is the official organ of the English Association, a semi-official body which exists to develop interest in English literature and

writers. For this reason a certain amount of space is given over to Association affairs, reports on meetings, literary competitions, etc., but at the same time a considerable part of the magazine is devoted to articles, short stories and sketches, poetry and critical studies, as well as several book reviews per issue. On special occasions—such as the death of a leading English writer—most of an issue will be given to special appreciations and criticisms of the writer and his work (this was done, for instance, on the death of Laurence Binyon). In the case of poetry, preference is given to the work of younger writers. *English* is edited by George Cookson, and published three times a year, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 3 Cromwell Place (2nd Floor), London, S.W. 7.

*Decachord*. Although much reduced in scope and size by war circumstances, this review is one of the oldest-established of modern poetry collections. Its policy is expressed in the words: 'Run in the interests of living poets and their readers, for the publication of high-class poetry'. It provides one of the few remaining outlets for a type of traditional and lyrical poetry which does not now seem to receive much attention in other contemporary poetry reviews. *Decachord* is edited by Philippa Hole, and published bi-monthly, price 1s. per copy, from 31 Brick Street, Piccadilly, London, W. 1.

*Here and Now*. Launched in 1941 as a small domestic publication of a group of young writers, meeting for poetry readings, this has now been established on a more ambitious scale. Believing in an ideological and social exchange between all branches of art, and in the avoidance of the 'artistic clique', *Here and Now* proclaims that it presents no creed or poetic faith—'contributors write as individuals and should be judged individually'. A large amount of space is given to poetry and stories; some articles on literature and arts are also used. Contributors include Francis King, Pamela King, Alex Comfort, Laurence Whistler, Clifford Bax, Nicholas Moore and Herbert Palmer. *Here and Now* is edited by Sylvia Read and published occasionally, price 3s. per copy, from 26 Willow Road, Hampstead, N.W. 3.

*Here Today*. This is an interesting example of a possible development of the little review movement—a magazine with cultural aims applying itself to the activities of a single town (in this case, Reading). Agreeing that there is a great need for 'planning hard' to remove the many deficiencies of modern towns and cities, *Here Today* presents a detailed survey of local drama, with suggestions for improvement. Other articles include a study of the work of a famous novelist with Reading connections. Space is given to new writing—stories, sketches, poems—by local writers. The policy is also to stress the need for reviving the spirit of community, and it is hoped that by its very publica-

tion the review can help in this direction. *Here Today* is edited by Pierre Edmunds and Roland Mathias and published occasionally, price 1s. 3d. per copy, from 16 Argyle Street, Reading, Berks.

*Horizon*. Founded at the beginning of 1940 *Horizon* has maintained a very high standard of writing, both in regard to articles and to the occasional short stories and poetry published. For this reason the tendency is to print mostly established and mature writers, and this was increasingly noticeable during 1944. At the same time it is significant that most of the newer writers appearing in the paper are of very great promise. *Horizon* specialises in publishing long critical and analytical studies of the arts—covering literature, music, art, poetry, etc. The policy of the paper is to try and help increase the interest in, and standard of, contemporary culture in all forms—though, perhaps, with particular reference to European culture. Reproductions of paintings are included in many issues. Contributors include Edward Sackville-West, Enid Starkie, Louis MacNeice, Stephen Spender, Arthur Koestler, W. R. Rodgers, John Betjeman, Anna Kavan, Augustus John and Kathleen Raine. *Horizon* is edited by Cyril Connolly and published monthly, price 2s., from 6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne Terrace, London, W. 1.

*Kingdom Come*. Started in Oxford as a wartime literary magazine, under the editorship of John Waller, this was subsequently taken over by a group of writers coming under the general title of Apocalyptic. Under this direction the magazine has laid special emphasis on the integrity of the creative artist, the need for a re-understanding of Christian philosophy, and for a reformation of educational methods. In addition to articles on these lines, each issue contains several short stories, sketches and critical studies, and a large poetry supplement. Contributors include Nicholas Moore, G. S. Fraser, J. F. Hendry, Conroy Maddox, Reginald Sorensen, Robert Melville, Norman Demuth, Anne Ridler, and Leslie Phillips. *Kingdom Come* (up to the time of writing this note) is edited by Stefan Schimanski, Henry Treece and Alan Rook, and published occasionally, price 1s. 6d., from 32 Sedgecombe Avenue, Kenton, Middlesex.

*Life and Letters Today*. Launched soon after the 1914–18 war, under the original editorship of Desmond McCarthy, this review now incorporates the *London Mercury* and *Bookman*, taken over just before the outbreak of the more recent war. In addition to book reviews and literary articles, extensive space is given to poems and stories by new and established writers. Sometimes an entire issue is devoted very largely to the work of one writer, or of one group of writers, or perhaps to the writers of one country. Welsh, Irish, Scottish, Indian,

American, Brazilian and other national cultures have been dealt with in this way. Contributors include Jack Lindsay, Fred Urquhart, Gwyn Jones, Dylan Thomas, Vernon Watkins, Henry Treece, Alex Comfort, Robert Greacen, Maurice Lindsay, Osbert Sitwell, Kate Roberts, and Stefan Schimanski. *Life and Letters Today* is edited by Robert Herring, and published monthly, price 1s. per copy, from 430 Strand, London, W.C. 2.

*Million*. Described as a self-contained publication of 'poems, stories, articles, reviews, illustrations, plays, scripts, reportage and any new vital forms', *Million* endeavours to present a policy of what it terms 'new left writing'. At the same time it emphasises that its field of action is cultural—'the work of art, that which is warm and beautiful and, unique, the world within the individual'. A large number of poems are published, including a number of political ones. Contents are balanced between well-known writers and fairly new writers. Contributors include Sean O'Casey, Mulk Raj Anand, Hugh MacDiarmid, Winifred Horrabin, Miles Carpenter, George Borodin, Honor Arundel, and Sydney Smith. *Million* is edited by John Singer, and published occasionally, price 2s. from 240 Hope Street, Glasgow, Scotland.

*New Saxon*. The aim of this review, proclaiming that the British are a decadent race, is to try and stimulate a greater faith in artistic and religious experience and inspiration—to try and arouse among the English the same spirit of national culture and values that is more noticeable among Welsh, Irish and Scottish groups. Contents include articles but are made up mostly of short stories, sketches and poetry—in the latter case an endeavour being made to print several poems by one poet in each issue. Contributors include Reginald Moore, Jack Aistrop, Elizabeth Berridge, L. J. Daventry, Bruce Bain, Ross Nichols and John Bate. *New Saxon* is edited by John Atkins, and published occasionally, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 4 Medhurst Row, Prettyman Lane, Near Edenbridge, Kent.

*Now*. Started soon after the outbreak of the war, this review gives the anarchist interpretation and criticism of art and literature, and is now sponsored by the official publishers of anarchist writings in Britain. Apart from a few poems and an occasional story or sketch, contents are made up of lengthy critical articles and studies of writers, artists, etc. Some of the best-known pacifist writers are published. Contributors include D. S. Savage, Nicholas Moore, Alexander Comfort, Herbert Read, Frederick Lohr, Louis Adeane, Francis Douglas, F. A. Ridley and Julian Symons. *Now* is edited by George Woodcock, and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 27 Belsize Road, London, N.W. 6.

*Oasis*. Begun as a domestic publication of a group of members of an Army Bomb Disposal Unit, this is now an independent literary review proclaiming as its policy: 'No Slogans—No Programme—No Plans for Utopia—No Art for Art's Sake.' In addition to sketches, poetry and book reviews, articles are published, dealing not only with literature but also with religion, music, philosophy, politics and the land. Contributors include John Bayliss, Victor Turner, John Atkins, Edith Davies, Derek Stanford and Denis Henry. *Oasis* is edited by John Bate and Conan Nicholas, and published occasionally, price 1s. 3d. per copy, from 28 Stafford Road, Croydon, Surrey.

*Our Time*. Formerly entitled *Poetry and the People*, this review now covers a wider field. Its aims are summarised as: (1) To develop the people's awakening desire for cultural enjoyment as a part of the whole struggle for fuller life, (2) To support all organisations bringing culture to the people, (3) To enlist the professional artist in the realisation of these aims. Subjects covered in the magazine include cinema, music, literature, drama, art, reportage. Contributors include Michael Redgrave, Beatrix Lehmann, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Ivor Montague, John Manifold, Jack Lindsay, Paul Potts, Honor Arundel, Jack Beeching and Hubert Nicholson. *Our Time* is edited by Edgell Rickwood, assisted by Arnold Rattenbury, and published monthly, price 6d. per copy, from 28–29 Southampton Street, London, W.C. 2.

*Outposts*. This is a small review started 'to provide a convenient platform for younger writers. We are concerned not only with the publication of outstanding poetry at a reasonable price, but also in assembling those poets, recognised and unrecognised, who, by reason of the particular outposts they occupy, are able to visualise the dangers and opportunities which confront the individual and the whole of humanity.' Contributors include Honor Arundel, Hardiman Scott, Roderick Webb, Cyril Hughes, Sarah Stafford and John Manifold. *Outposts* is edited by Howard Sergeant, and published occasionally, price 1s. per copy, from 59 Orchard Avenue, Squire's Gate, Blackpool.

*Penguin New Writing*. A development, in cheaper form of the *New Writing* book-magazine introduced some years before the war by Hogarth Press, this is one of the most influential of modern little reviews, particularly as it specialises in presenting a great deal of work, by European writers, that might not otherwise be available in this country. In addition to general short stories and a few poems, nearly a quarter of each issue is given over to 'Report on Today', a collection of reportage writing. Increasing space has been given recently to surveys of contemporary music, painting, literature, ballet, etc.—

with emphasis on the need for bringing these arts to all classes of people. Contributors include Stephen Spender, Jack Marlowe, Joseph Gurnard, Louis MacNeice, Laurie Lee, Fred Urquhart, William Plomer, Walter Allen, V. S. Pritchett, Lawrence Little, Roy Fuller, Terence Tiller, and Edith Sitwell. *Penguin New Writing* is edited by John Lehmann, and published quarterly, price 9d. per copy, from Penguin Books, Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex.

*Poetry London*. One of the most ambitious of the British reviews devoted entirely to the subject of poetry, this also probably has the largest sale of its kind, running into many thousands of copies. In recent times more and more space has been given to new poets and one issue consisted entirely of work by new poets who have never before appeared in print. Believing that 'if such a magazine as *PL* existed before for publishing young poets the number of interesting poets in the '30's would have been much greater', the review hopes that by its policy it will help modern poets to get the wider hearing they deserve. Each issue contains, apart from poetry—including many long poems—a special poetry book review section, together with an occasional piece of poetic prose, and illustrations. Contributors include Kenneth Allott, Laurence Clark, Nicholas Moore, John Hall, John Heath-Stubbs, G. S. Fraser, Francis Scarfe, W. S. Graham, Kathleen Raine, Anne Ridler and George Woodcock. *Poetry London* is edited by Tambimuttu, and published occasionally, at varying prices, from 26 Manchester Square, London, W. 1.

*Poetry Review*. Founded as long as thirty-two years ago, this is the official journal of the Poetry Society of Great Britain, which publishes it 'not only for members but for general circulation, as a guide to what is best in poetry'. While a large amount of space is taken up with internal affairs of the Society—competition results, reports of branch meetings, etc.—there are several sections of new poetry in each issue as well as a very extensive review section covering most new books of poetry. Much of the poetry published is 'beginner's work', by members of the society, but at the same time many older and very well-established poets contribute. Critical studies of famous poets, living and dead, are a feature of most issues. Contributors include Edmund Blunden, Charles Morgan, Rostrevor Hamilton, Herbert Palmer, Arnold Bowen, Ruth Pitter, Herbert Corby, G. A. Wagner, Maurice Lindsay, Patric Dickinson and John Buxton. *Poetry Review* is edited by the secretary of the Poetry Society, Galloway Kyle, and published monthly, price 1s., from 33 Portman Square, London. W. 1.

*Poetry (Scotland)*. Launched to overcome 'a Burns hangover', and to 'show Scotland herself, and the outside world, that she can produce

poetry to-day which is as strong and moving as the poetry of England, Wales or America', this is yet another to strengthen the growing list of national and regional reviews. The bulk of the review is given over to new Scottish poetry, by poets of very differing outlooks (and including several poems in Gaelic and Lallans), but space is also given to representative poems by Welsh, Irish and English poets. Articles on new trends in Scottish poetry, and book reviews, are other features. Contributors include Hugh MacDiarmid, Adam Drinan, J. F. Hendry, W. S. Graham, Ruthven Todd, Douglas Young, Edwin Muir, Sydney Smith and G. S. Fraser. *Poetry (Scotland)* is edited by Maurice Lindsay, and published occasionally, price 4s. 6d. per copy, from 240 Hope Street, Glasgow.

*Poetry Quarterly*. Started in a small way some years before the war this later changed ownership and has since been built up as one of the best outlets for the work of new and younger poets—being issued by one of the very few publishing houses devoted practically entirely to poetry books. There is no over-riding policy other than to publish good poetry and let it speak for itself. About one-third of each issue is devoted to detailed reviews of new books of poetry. Contributors include Nicholas Moore, Fred Marnau, Ernest Sigler, Sean Jennett, Alex Comfort, John Bayliss, John Hall, Norman Nicholson, Alan Rook, Keidrych Rhys, Hardiman Scott, Ruthven Todd and Christopher Middleton. *Poetry Quarterly* is edited by Wrey Gardiner, and published quarterly, price 1s. 6d. per copy, from 4 Vernon Place, London, W.C. 1.

*Scottish Art and Letters*. The aim of this publication, it is stated, is to aid the present revival in the artistic life of Scotland by providing a common platform—hitherto sadly lacking—where new and experimental work by Scottish poets and critics and story writers can be assessed together. As with the companion publication, *Poetry (Scotland)*, the review endeavours to present work both in Gaelic and Lallans, and in English, though one of the aims is specifically to encourage the revival of Scots as a written language. Apart from short stories and articles, there are articles on art and education in Scotland, critical studies and several reproductions of paintings. Contributors include J. F. Hendry, James Bridie, J. D. Fergusson, Adam Drinan, Maurice Lindsay, Norman McCaig, Somhairle MacGhilleanain, Morley Jamieson, A. S. Neill, and Fred Urquhart. *Scottish Art and Letters* is edited by R. Crombie Saunders, with J. D. Fergusson as art editor, and published quarterly, price 5s. per copy, from 240 Hope Street, Glasgow.

*Scots Writing*. The aim of this review is to 'provide a broad and pop-

ular medium of Scottish expression, as distinct from the general writing of English . . . a publication devoted exclusively to Scots writing and Scots artists'. At the same time it is primarily a medium for new writers. Contents are made up of stories, sketches and poems, many of them in Scots dialect, together with illustrations. Contributors include Margaret Hamilton, Coleman Milton, Peter Paterson, Malcolm Miller, Angus Baxter and John Lavin. *Scots Writing* is edited by P. McCrory and Alec Donaldson, and published occasionally, price 1s. per copy, from 69 Ingram Street, Glasgow, C. 1.

*Scrutiny*. Described as 'a serious intellectual review of literature and cultural matter in general', this has its roots in the university town of Cambridge and contains the work of many university dons and professors. Its standards of literary criticism are very exacting and scholastic. It is one of the few reviews able to give space for lengthy and detailed analyses of specific pieces of literature—i.e. a scene from a play, a section of a poem, one aspect of a writer's attitude. Contents are made up of a few general articles, critical studies of writers, and a large book review section. *Scrutiny* is edited by an editorial board of four, D. W. Harding, L. C. Knights, F. R. Leavis and W. H. Mellers, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Downing College, Cambridge.

*Scythe*. At one time this was published under the title *Townsman*, and devoted almost entirely to literary contents. More recently it has given increasing space to such subjects as agriculture, village crafts development of rural industries, etc., which explains the change to a more appropriate name. While most articles are now on these lines, there are also articles of literary criticism, book reviews and poems, while it is a definite policy of the review to stress the need for the artist to connect himself with the revival of agriculture, village life and arts, etc. Contributors include Rolf Gardiner, Adrian Bell, Henry Williamson, Earl of Portsmouth, Henry Swabey, Norman Nicholson, Peter Wells, H. J. Massingham and Nigel Spottiswoode. *Scythe* is edited by Ronald Duncan and published quarterly, price 2s. per copy, from West Mill, Moerwenstow, North Cornwall.

*Seven*. In the years before the war this review presented the work of the Apocalyptic group of writers, such as Dylan Thomas and Henry Treece, but since the outbreak of war it became 'a magazine of people's writings' and has set out to reach a wide audience, particularly among members of the Forces. Specialising in very short sketches, interviews, reportage, etc., it thus probably publishes more items per issue than almost any other review. Every issue has several first-hand accounts of experiences—as, for instance, by a prisoner of war, a merchant seaman, a coal miner, a hospital porter, a woman telephonist, and so on. Con-

tributors include David Alexander, W. Glynne Jones, Ted Willis, Don Barry, Fay King, Mulk Raj Anand, James McCormick, Roland Mathias and Ez Pitt. *Seven* is edited by Sydney D. Tremayne, and published quarterly, price 1s. per copy, from 28–29 Southampton Street, London, W.C. 2.

*Voices*. Aiming to 'emphasise the importance of the individual' in a world of mass-production and standardisation, this review publishes work by a wide variety of individualist writers. Since its inception it has printed a series of interpretative articles about art and literature, together with special factual articles on health, education, village crafts, agriculture, sociology, etc. About a third of each issue is given over to short stories, sketches and poetry, mostly by new writers. Contributors include Derek Stanford, Dorothy Haynes, Dion Byngham, Mulk Raj Anand, Fred Urquhart, John Bayliss, Hardiman Scott, Wilfred Wellock, Alec Craig, Vernon Watkins, Robin Athill and John Ward. *Voices* is edited by Denys Val Baker, and published occasionally, price 1s. 3d. per copy, from Wood House, Wiggington, Tring, Herts.

*Wales*. Founded in 1937 this review helped very much in bringing about a Welsh literary revival just before the war. After having to cease publication for a period, it has recently been revived and is now appearing regularly. The policy of the review is described as 'primarily cultural—in the broadest sense; it is non-party, independent, progressive, and will remain a platform for free expression'. While advocating the return to the use of Welsh for literature, the review at the same time encourages an Anglo-Welsh movement, pointing out 'we want to make them (the English) aware of Welsh differences and virtues. English is the only medium in which this can be done.' Contents comprise articles on Welsh literature, art, politics, and social life, together with critical studies, book reviews, poetry, sketches and stories. Contributors include George Ewart Evans, Huw Menai, Idris Davies, Robert Graves, Lynnette Roberts, Vernon Watkins, Nigel Heseltine and R. S. Thomas. *Wales* is edited by Keidrych Rhys and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from Ty Gwyn, Llanybri, Nr. Carmarthen.

*Welsh Review*. Established before the war this review was also forced into a temporary cessation of publication, but has recently been revived. Its policy is to print the best possible work, to encourage new writers, to introduce to English readers the work of leading Welsh writers,—and at the same time to introduce to the Welsh-speaking Welsh something of what their English-speaking compatriots are thinking and doing,—and to deal with the many political, economical, educational and religious problems on which there is need for Welsh

unity. Each issue contains articles, critical studies, book reviews, poetry and short stories. Contributors include the late Alun Lewis and Caradoc Evans, Kate Roberts, Brenda Chamberlain, Jack Jones, Edgar L. Chappell, Idwal Jones, Iorwerth C. Peate and Gwilym Davies. *Welsh Review* is edited by Gwyn Jones, and published quarterly, price 2s. 6d. per copy, from 117 St. Mary Street, Cardiff.

*Wind and the Rain*. Started as a literary magazine by a group of students at Ampleforth College, Yorks, this has now developed into an independent review of modern literature and arts, with a Catholic background. Pointing out that 'hate will not conquer hate', the review emphasises that there have never been moments when men cease to be human beings, and urges continued working for the unity of all humanity. Contents consist mostly of articles and critical studies, most from a Catholic literary point of view, together with book reviews, poetry and an occasional story or sketch. Contributors include Paul Foster, Robin Atthill, Christopher Hollis, Dallas Kenmare, Eric Nixon, G. Wilson Knight, Raynor D. Chapman, Hugo Manning, Maud Bodkin, and John Holgate. *Wind and the Rain* is edited by Neville Braybrooke, and published occasionally, price 1s. 6d. from 15 Newton Court, London, W. 8.





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